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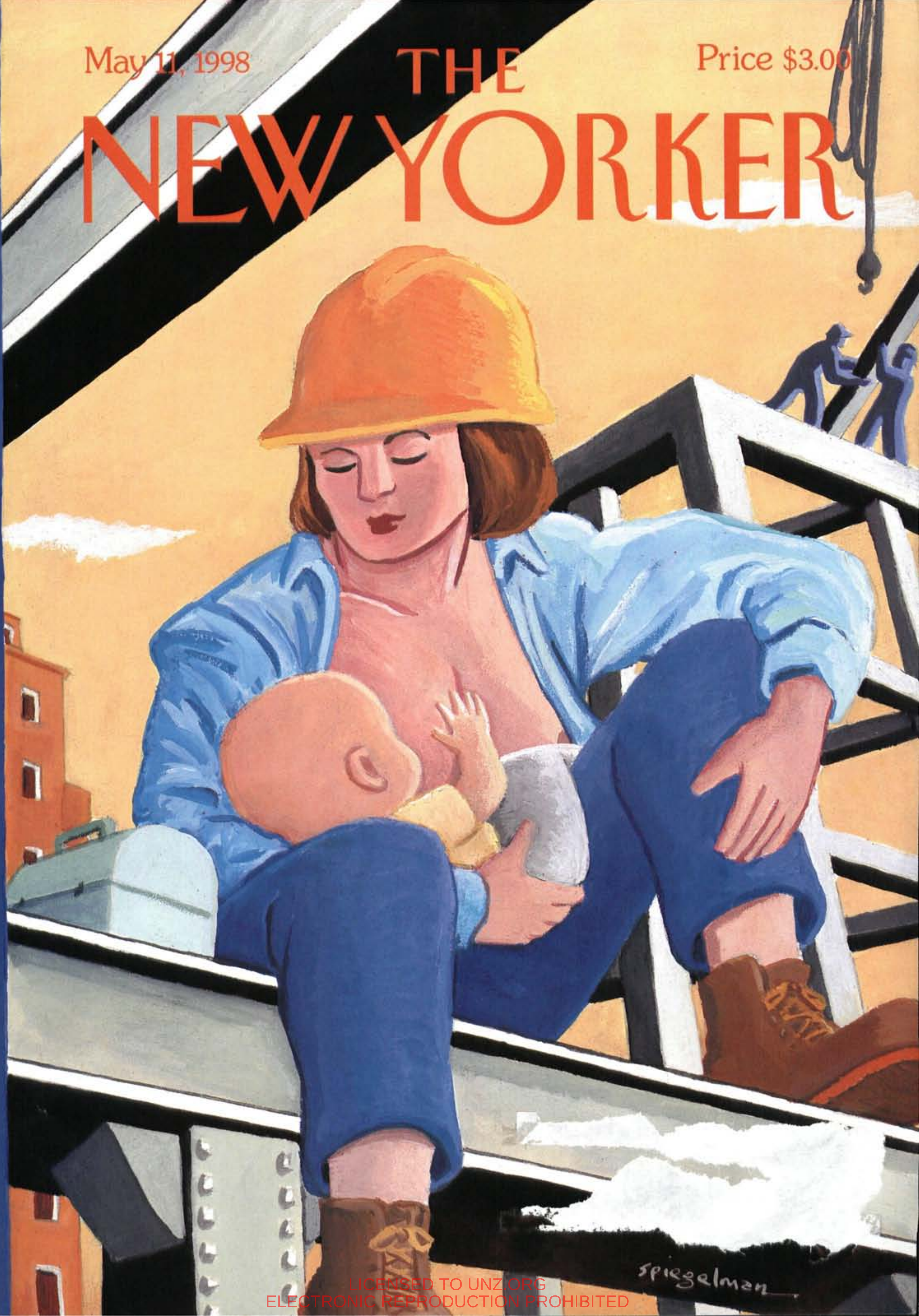
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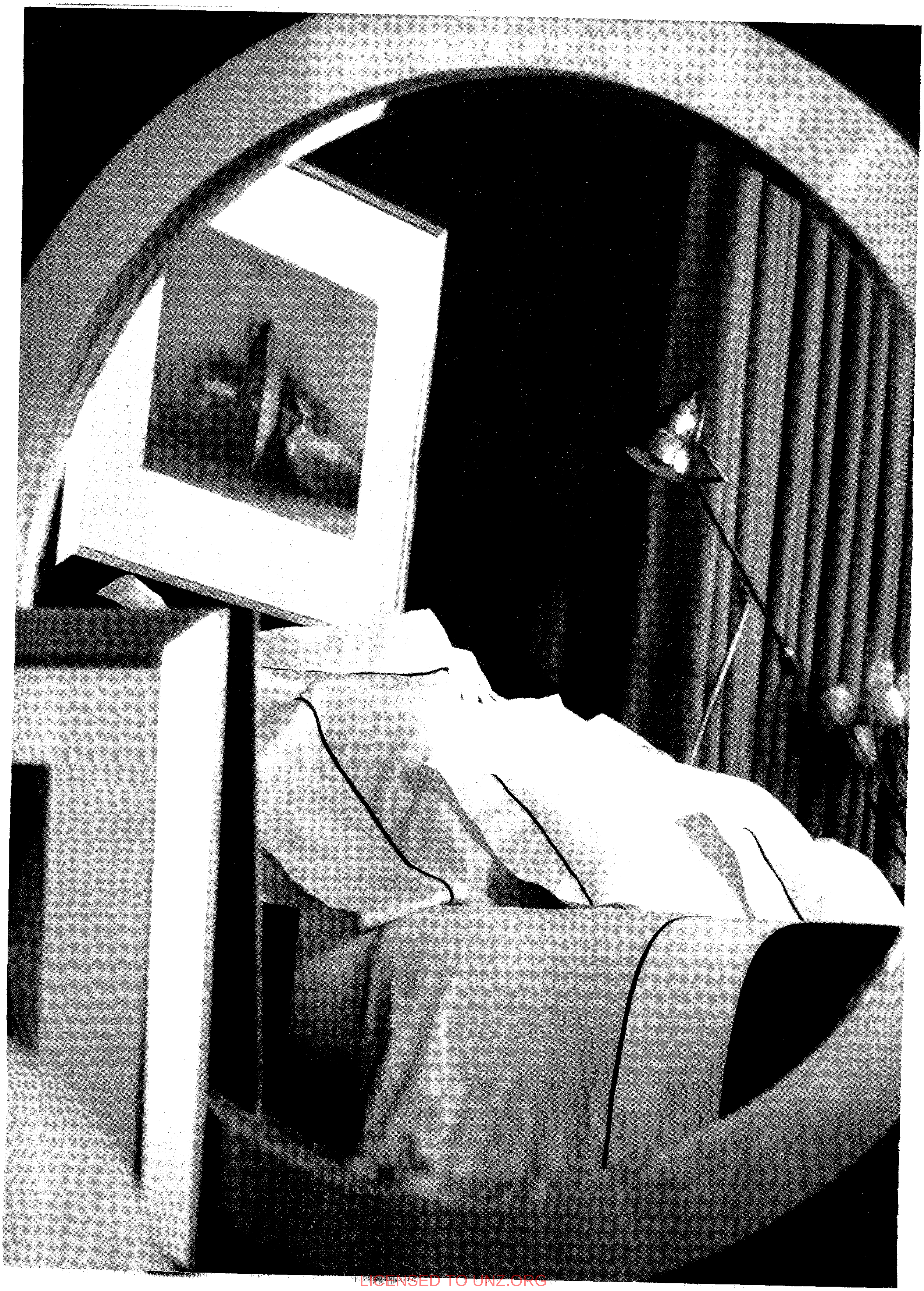

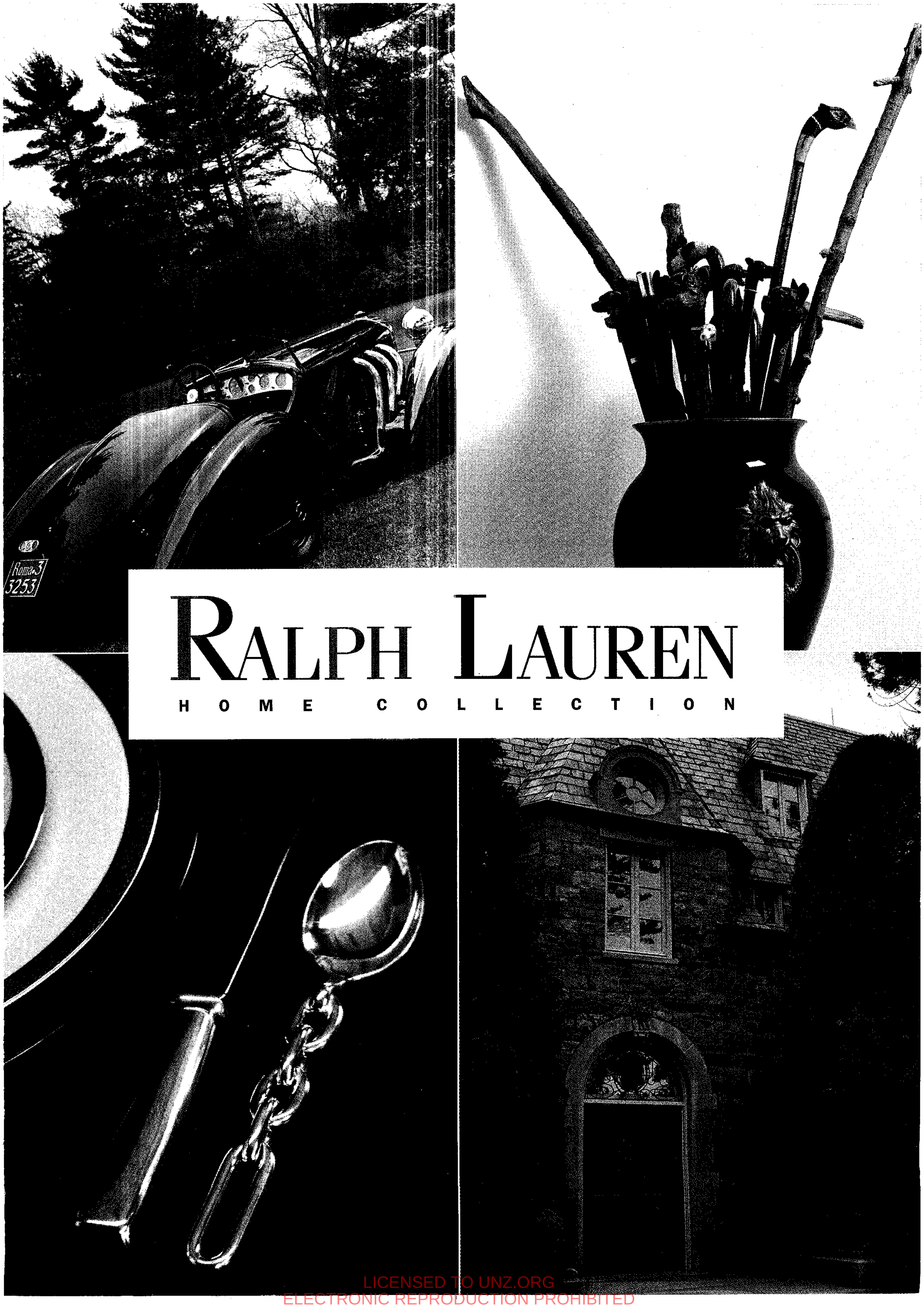

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THE NEW YORKER

MAY 11, 1998

COMMENT Rudy Awakening . . . . *Roger Angell* 8
The truth about the Mayor's Yankee Stadium dream.

THE MAIL 10

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN 12

THE TALK OF THE TOWN 37
A special prosecutor everybody likes; Diana's pillar; etc.

DEPARTMENTS

Annals of Diplomacy The Genocide Fax . . . . *Philip Gourevitch* 42
A warning was sent to the U.N. that might have saved Rwanda. Who chose to ignore it?

Medical Dispatches The Shadow Epidemic . . . . *Jerome Groopman* 48
Three million Americans are unaware they have a disease that may be as lethal as AIDS.

Cultural Politics The White Negro . . . . *Henry Louis Gates, Jr.* 62
Warren Beatty reinvents black comedy in "Bulworth."

THE WORLD OF BUSINESS Bronfman's Big Deals . . . . *Connie Bruck* 66
Is Edgar Bronfman, Jr., really in trouble at Universal?

AMERICAN NOTES Robert F. Kennedy . . . . *Michael Knox Beran* 70

SHOWCASE Royal Shakespeare Company . . . . *Chris Callis* 78

LIFE AND LETTERS The Mother of Confusion . . . . *Claudia Roth Pierpont* 80
How Gertrude Stein created modernism.

FICTION "Intimacy" . . . . *Hanif Kureishi* 90
A man's last night with his family.

THE CRITICS

Books Ron Chernow's "Titan: The Life of John D. Rockefeller, Sr." . . . *John Cassidy* 98
Showcase David Hare's "The Judas Kiss" . . . . *Richard Avedon* 102
The Current Cinema "Character," "A Friend of the Deceased" . . . *Daphne Merkin* 107

POEMS

"Commosso" . . . . *Kenneth Koch* 52
"Ardor" . . . . *Donald Hall* 74

CROSSWORD 8 x 10 Cryptic No. 43 109

SHOUTS & MURMURS Jerry Springer's Voice Mail . . . . *Bill Scheft* 110

COVER *Lunch Breaks, by Art Spiegelman*

DRAWINGS *Donald Reilly, Mick Stevens, Edward Frascino, Jack Ziegler, Robert Mankoff, Tom Cheney, Frank Cotham, Michael Crawford, Leo Cullum, William Hamilton, Michael Maslin, Danny Shanahan, Roz Chast, Charles Barsotti, Bruce Eric Kaplan*

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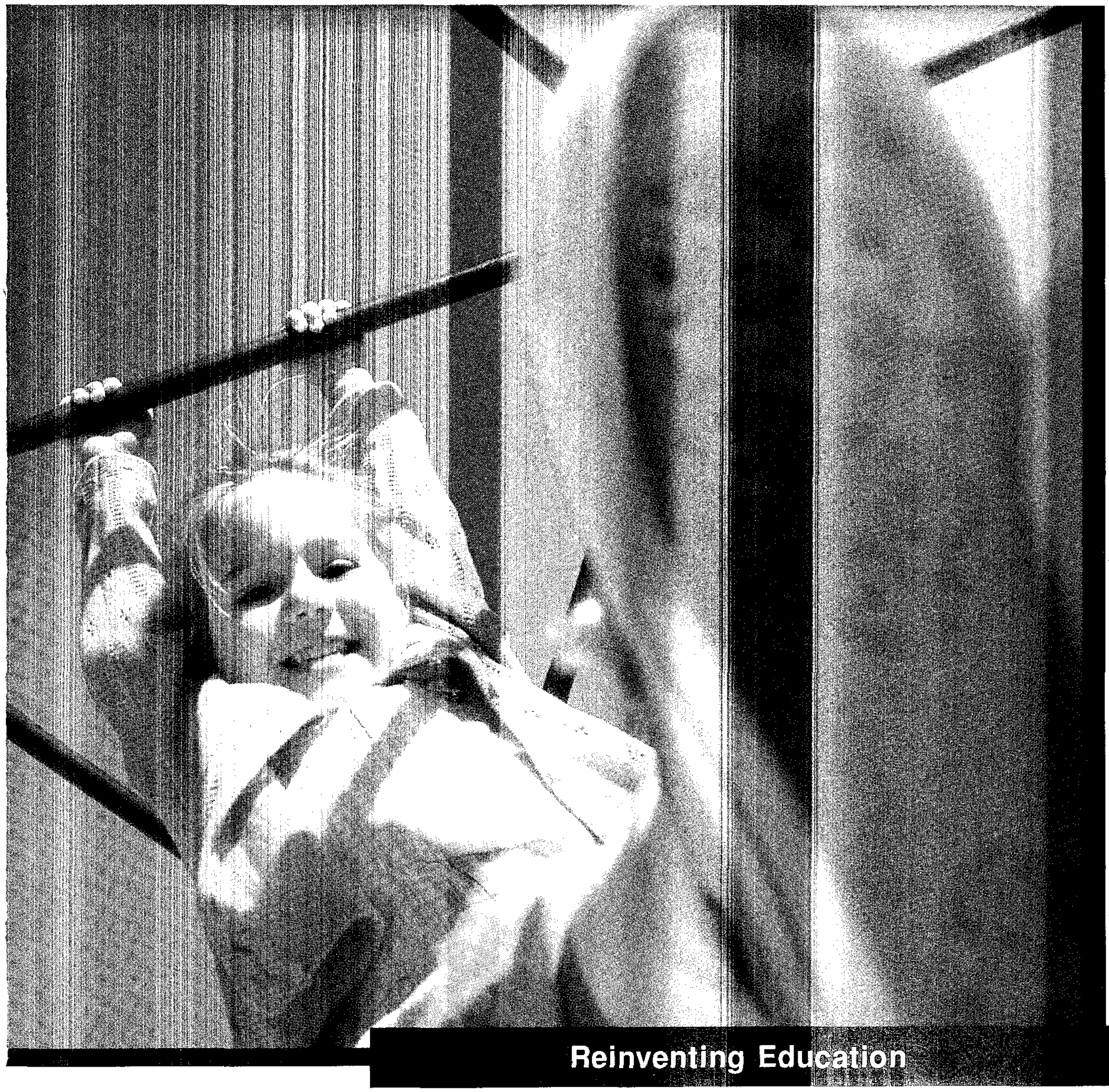

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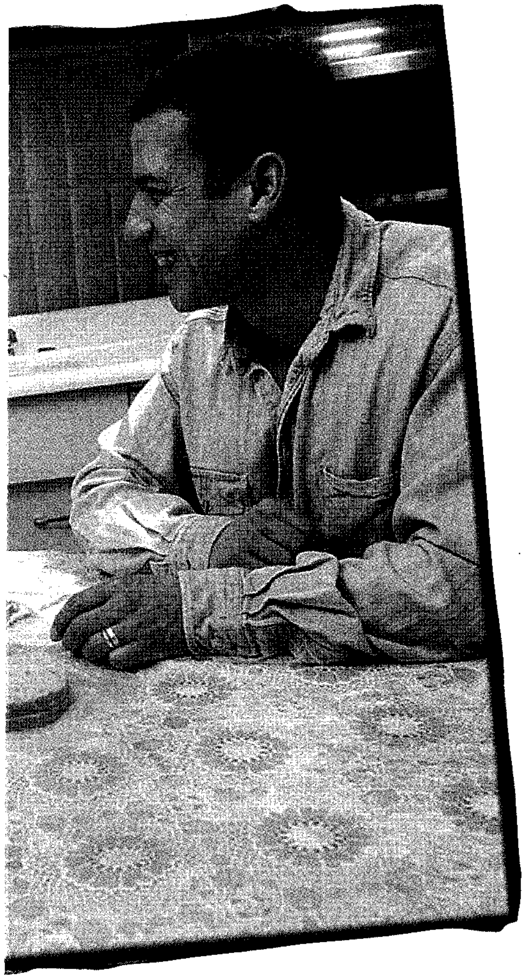

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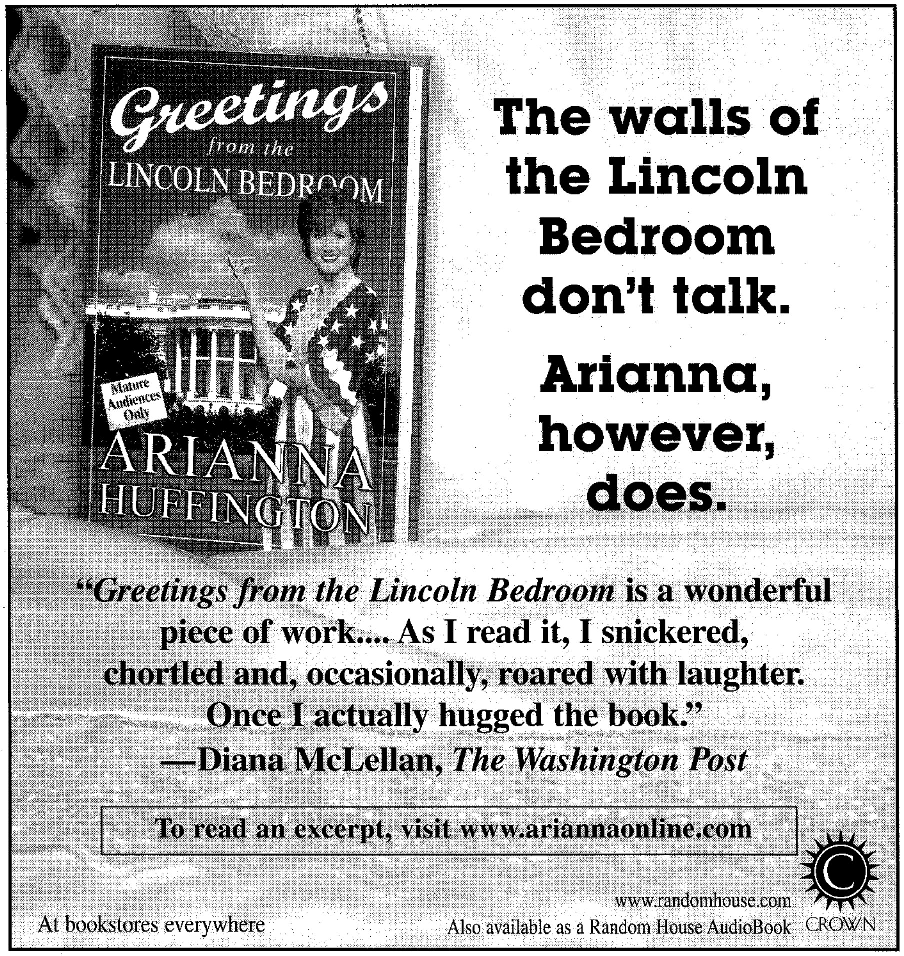

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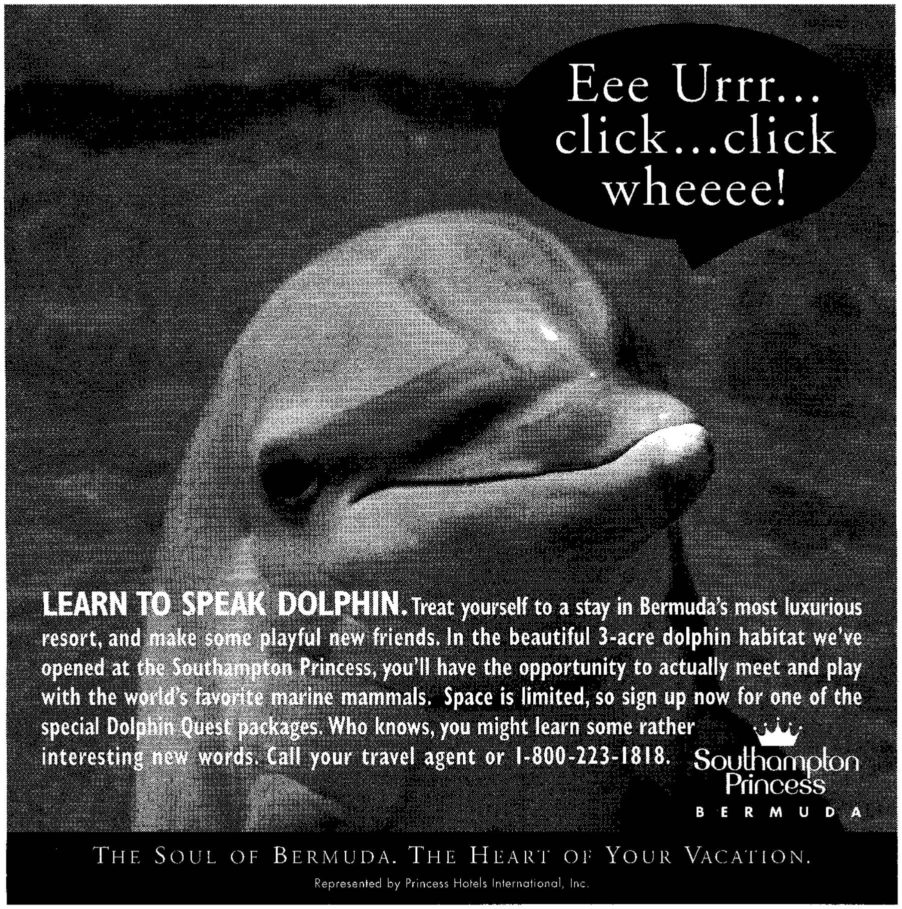

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CONTRIBUTORS

CONNIE BRUCK ("Bronfman's Big Deals," p. 66) has twice won the National Magazine Award for her *New Yorker* reporting. Her most recent article, "The Big Hitter," about Rupert Murdoch's attempt to purchase the Los Angeles Dodgers, was published last December.

PHILIP GOUREVITCH ("The Genocide Fax," p. 42) is a staff writer for this magazine. His first book, "We Wish To Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda," will be published this fall.

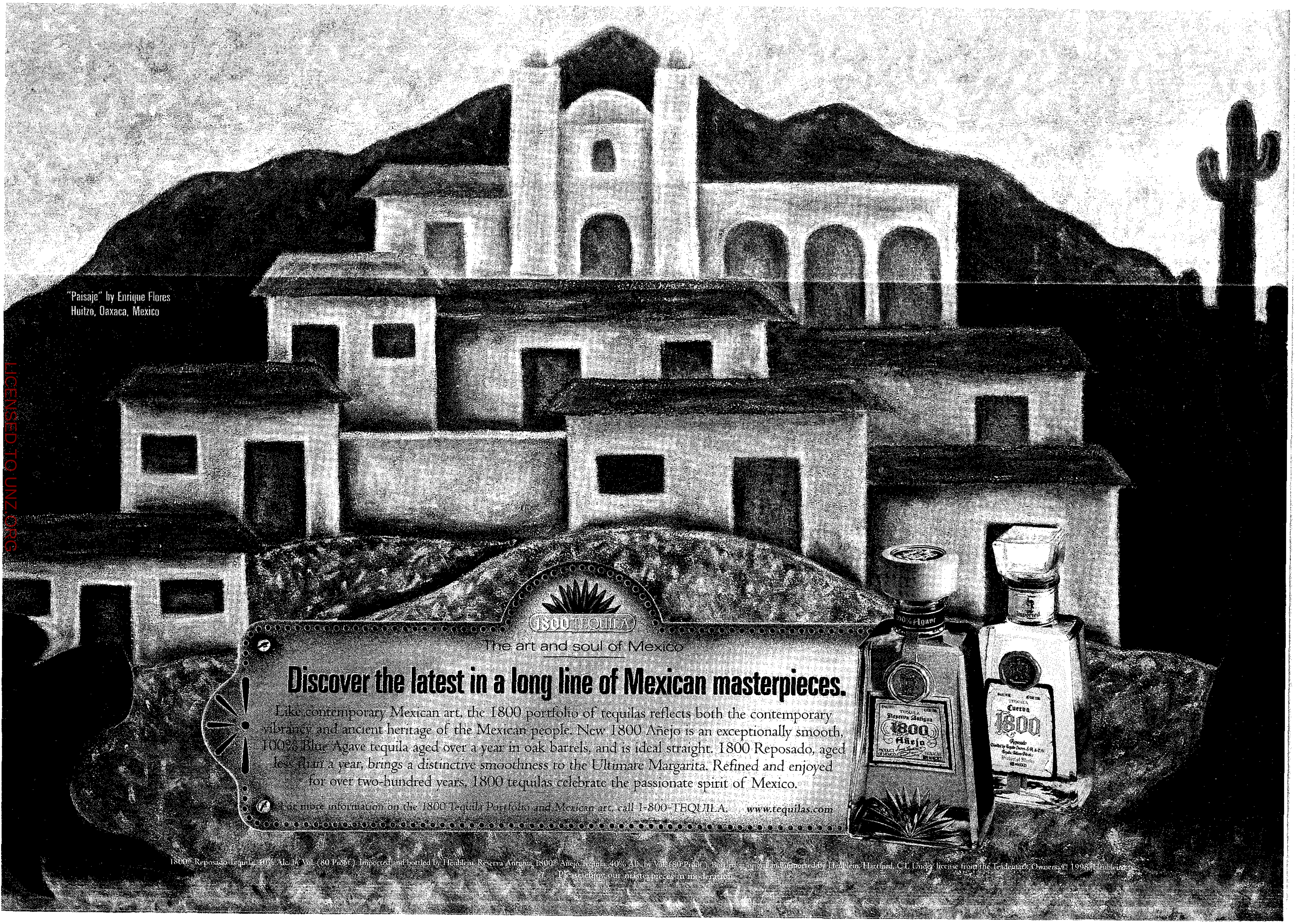
CLAUDIA ROTH PIERPONT ("The Mother of Confusion," p. 80) has been a contributor to this magazine since 1990. Her first book, a collection of her *New Yorker* essays, is due out next year.

JEROME GROOPMAN ("The Shadow Epidemic," p. 48) is the Recanati Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School and the author of "The Measure of Our Days." His most recent *New Yorker* article, "Decoding Destiny," about genetic testing, appeared in February.

HANIF KUREISHI (Fiction, p. 90) is a novelist, whose books include "The Buddha of Suburbia" and "The Black Album." He has also written several screenplays, among them "My Beautiful Laundrette." He lives in London.

CHRIS CALLIS (photograph, p. 78) teaches lighting at the School of Visual Arts. His work has appeared in advertising campaigns for Hewlett-Packard and Motorola.

MICHAEL KNOX BERAN (American Notes, p. 70) is a lawyer who lives in New York. His first book, "The Last Patrician: Bobby Kennedy and the End of American Aristocracy," will be published in June. ♦



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COMMENT

RUDY AWAKENING

The Mayor's dream stadium should go away.

If baseball is losing its audience, how come everybody in New York—in line at the movies, at the A.T.M.s, at the Under 10 Items checkout at Food Emporium—had an opinion about Yankee Stadium last week? All the old pastime has needed, it seems, is a good plot line: faded shrine, pin-striped heroes, imperious owner, dorky Mayor, greedy real-estate barons, aggrieved fans, billion-dollar outlays, and the Hand of God—that five-hundred-pound expansion joint that fell out of the upper deck of Section 22 last month, crushing Seat 7 in Row A and launching a thousand jokes about Mr. Steinbrenner's skill with a hacksaw. Get me Stephen Sondheim: this is the next great American musical. For comedy, what could top that front-page photograph of Mayor Giuliani in his Yankees jacket eagerly climbing into Mr. Steinbrenner's pocket, there at Shea Stadium (during the Yanks' extemporized game against the Angels), with the ecstatic expression of a high-school math whiz unexpectedly invited to bring his lunch over to the varsity training table?

For American values, we have the cabdriver consensus that the fallen chunk of Yankee Stadium means we should close up the seventy-five-year-old landmark, once and for all. Like, if you can't pick up Imus on the family-car radio anymore, trade in the car.

The Mayor describes himself as a fan, but there is no recent evidence that he consorts with fans who don't come to the game by limo. His avidity to put the Yankees into an eight-hundred-million-to-a-billion-dollar Manhattan stadium (give or take a retractable roof), above or near the train yards in the West Thirties, and to help support the project with the widely hated commercial-rent tax isn't just high-handed; it's nutzoid grandiose. Mr. Giuliani also wants to help out Fred Wilpon, the co-owner of the Mets, who has presented a scale model of his replacement for the thirty-four-year-old, prematurely creaking Shea Stadium, which he proposes to build not in Staten Island or in Central Park but in the parking lot a couple of hundred feet northeast of the present arena. The new Shea, whose projected façade bears a distant resemblance to Ebbets Field, would feature seventy-eight corporate luxury suites. The cost of the two new stadiums, plus improvements,

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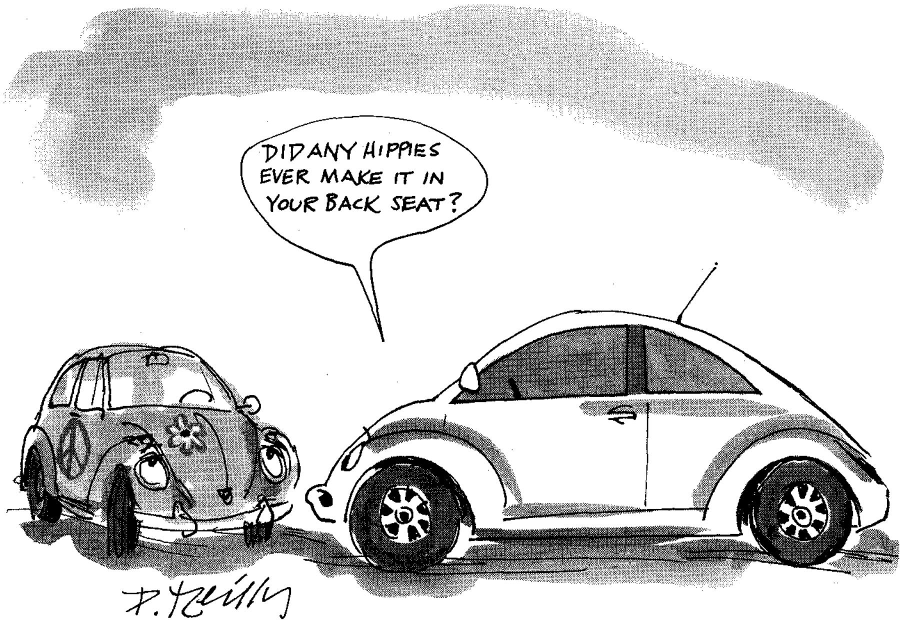
comes close to two billion dollars, with the taxpayers and the ticket-buyers ultimately picking up the tab, of course.

Luxury suites are what this is all about. It isn't George's parking problems in the Bronx that have made him play mind games with us about moving the Yankees out of the city; it's the awkwardness of trying to squeeze corporate suites into the House That Ruth Built. These over-appointed balconies can rent out for up to three hundred thousand dollars each per season, and are the centerpiece, the raison d'être, of the new stadiums in Baltimore, Cleveland, and Arlington and of those being rushed to completion elsewhere. Like the other owners, Steinbrenner understands that the suites are part of an ongoing transformation of baseball from its blue-collar urban past to a suburban-audience entertainment: a mall with action figures and with plenty of places for spending whenever the game flags. Going to a ballgame is becoming a perk of the new rich—another Knicks courtside—but why is our Mayor in such a rush to speed this dreary yuppification along?

The absence of public transportation from the environs of the West Side site is the little defect that should end this particular dream. As we know, getting to the park and back by subway has always been a sweet part of New York baseball—that swaying sense of expectation on the way, and triumph or gloom palpable everywhere in the crowded homeward cars. The ballgame subway is one of the few places where New York still meets itself face to face and in good cheer. The Giuliani site, incidentally, has been described in advance billings as being close to public transportation, but a three-block walk from the Eighth Avenue IND stop would be along those endless east-west blocks—the equal of eleven north-south blocks, as trudging fans would rediscover on the first leg of their late journey home.

The guess here is that Yankee Stadium West will never be built. Lawsuits and environmental studies will drag it on for a decade or more (look at Westway), and the vision of the blaring nightly tangle in and out of the Lincoln Tunnel and of limo lines overheating on the West Side Highway will always intrude upon the Mayor's boosterish visions of tens of millions in revenue from ancillary fan spending. Mr. Steinbrenner, meanwhile, will be long gone—or else just possibly at home in a remodelled, light-luxury, still historic Yankee Stadium. A third possibility, outlandishly practical, is for the city to help build a single new ballpark, out at the Shea site, that will house both teams (with separate grand-luxe clubhouses) while cutting that giant impost on the city in half. Call the place Stengel Stadium or Torre Terrace or Chez Yogi (all three managed both clubs), and let the Mayor-jock throw out the first pitch on Opening Day.... Nah, makes too much sense. Fuggedaboudit. —Roger Angell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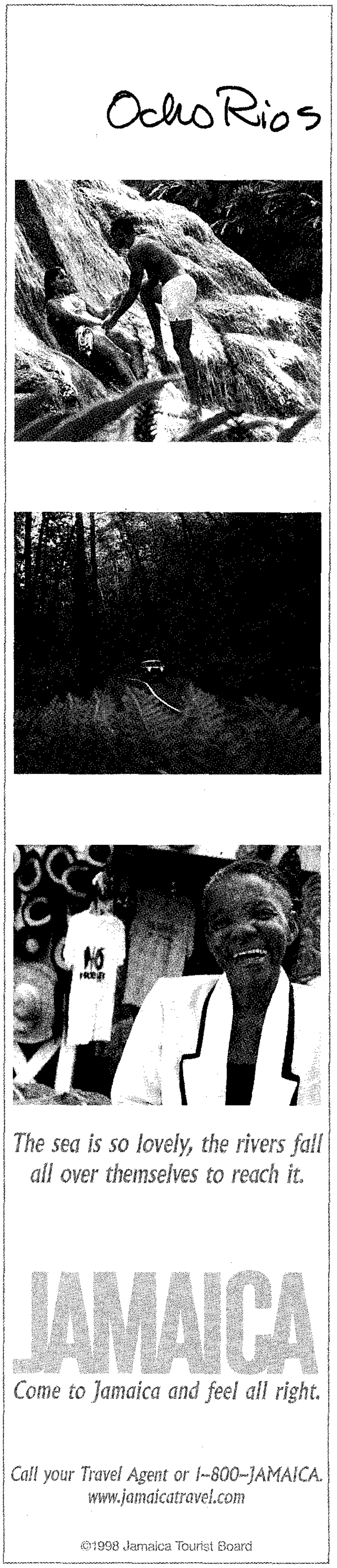

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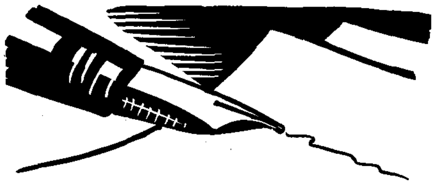

THE SEMANTICS OF HYSTERIA

Joan Acocella's "The Politics of Hysteria" (April 6th) is a welcome discussion of the convergence of feminist extremism with diagnoses of multiple-personality disorder. But her conclusion—that "M.P.D. will die"—wills away a valid, if admittedly misused, clinical diagnosis. Memories formed before the age of five, whether good or bad, are few and distorted, but the results of trauma last a lifetime. Abused children are indeed "survivors" of unspeakable acts; we should not trivialize what has been done to them by comparing it with an occasional spanking. The severe, repeated abuse of young children of all economic classes and both sexes is all too real, and as long as it continues to occur, so will legitimate cases of M.P.D.

JEFFRY ORDOVER, M.D.
Great Neck, N.Y.

I would add to Ms. Acocella's exposé of M.P.D. that it's important to stress the frequency of male hysteria, which is so stigmatizing a disorder that male doctors and patients have come up with dozens of camouflaging names for it over the past century, including "neurasthenia," "shell shock," and "Gulf War Syndrome." (Timothy McVeigh, who, while serving in the Army, became convinced that the government had implanted a microchip in his buttocks, was arguably one of the worst cases.) I would also add that hysterical epidemics, though they may begin in disadvantaged populations, are fuelled and spread by the privileged and highly educated. Hysteria is a Hydra, and no amount of reason, alas, will chop off all its heads.

ELAINE SHOWALTER
Avalon Foundation Professor of the Humanities
Princeton University
Princeton, N.J.

One article of faith for M.P.D. therapists is the recovered memory of abuse; the patient is urged to believe even the most outlandish memories if they seem real to her—even if her alleged abusers can produce clear evidence to the contrary. But isn't this just what some historians have been saying for years: that, since the truth of past events is unknowable, people may believe any narrative that suits them? And the notion of "alternate personalities"—including, as Ms. Acocella notes, one called "Just Me"—calls to mind another chic academic doctrine: that the self is a mere "social construct," devoid of any true essential nature. Have the fashionable academic trends of the last two decades poisoned the well of psychiatric practice?

SUSAN WOOD
Associate Professor of Art History
Oakland University
Rochester, Mich.

MUSICAL CHAIRS

Bob Cenedella's mural at Le Cirque 2000 is a delightfully frivolous, imaginary class reunion of New York Café Society of the last twenty years, and very much in the spirit of Sirio Maccioni's great restaurant (Table Talk, by Eric Alterman, in The Talk of the Town, April 13th). Though there's no shame in losing my "seat" at that table to Philip Roth, I do want to make it clear that I in no way pushed my way to a place there. Nor did I leave, as Cenedella seems to think, without paying the "check"—in the form of a sidebar on the mural that he hoped would accompany my piece on Le Cirque 2000 in *New York*. Cenedella sought me out and asked if he could include me in the picture. Though I was charmed by the mural and did indeed propose that it be reproduced in the magazine, it could not be, as Alterman mentioned—shrinking it to fit would have left the figures so small that one would have been hard pressed to tell Julia Child from Richard Nixon. I had made no promises. I only hope that Philip Roth's head will have a longer run on my shoulders than mine did.

PETER KAMINSKY
Brooklyn, N.Y.

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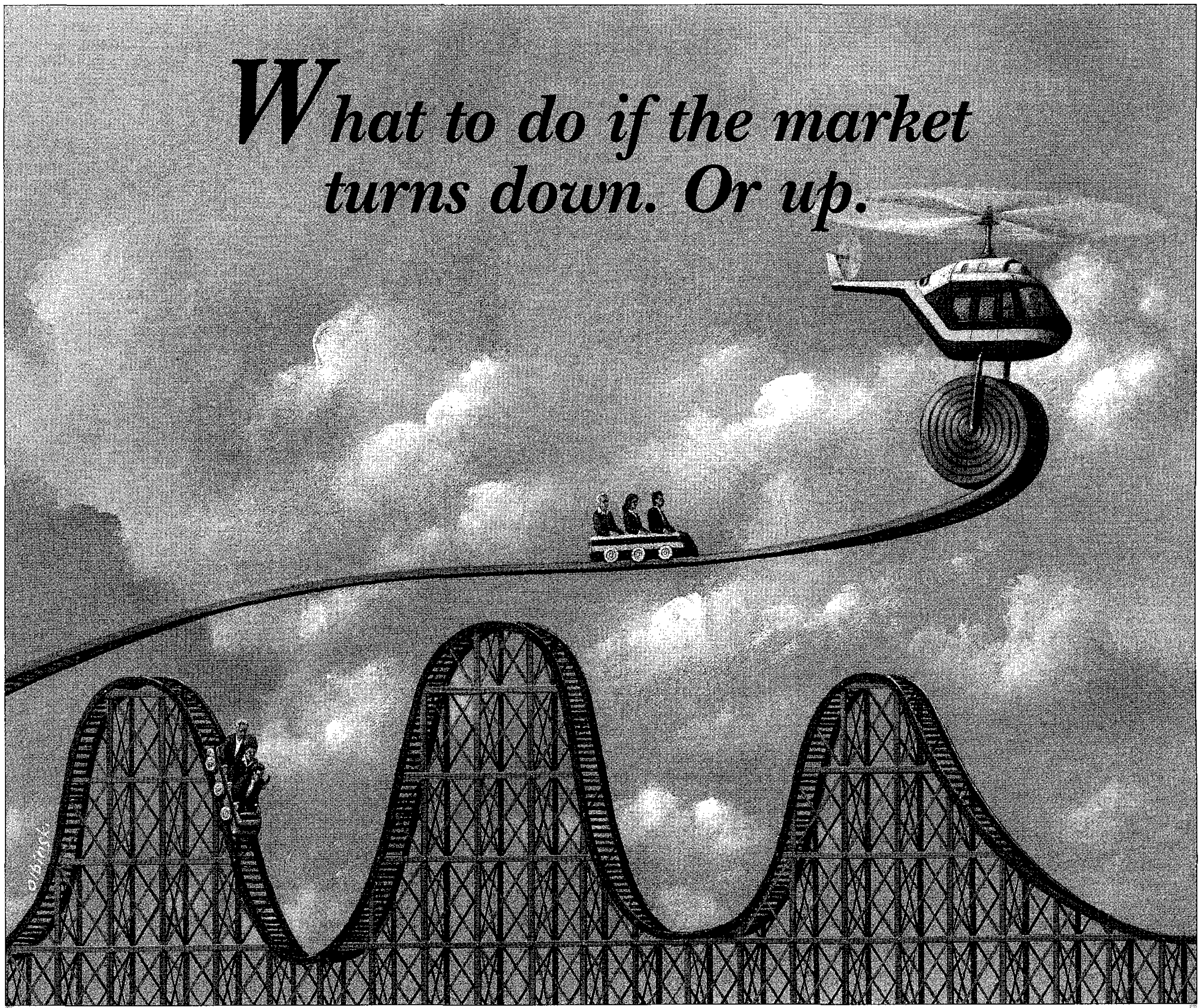
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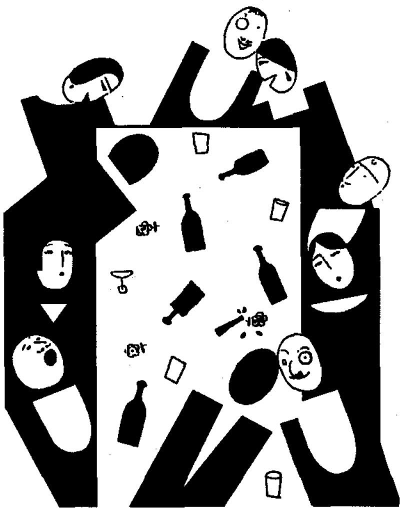

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THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Boom: The Lost Generation—F. Scott Fitzgerald, Dorothy Parker, Maxwell Perkins, Ernest Hemingway, and other writers and editors make up the cast of characters in this chronicle of New York literary life in the twenties. Preview on May 6. Opens May 7 at 8 and continues through May 17. (CSC Theatre, 136 E. 13th St. 279-4200.)

The Dying Gaul—A struggling writer gets seduced by Hollywood in a new play by Craig Lucas. Mark Brokaw is the director. In previews through May 10. Opens May 12 at 8. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

Ensemble Studio Theatre—This year's six-week marathon of one-acts begins May 6 at 7:30, with plays by Paul Rudnick, Billy Aronson, Barbara Sundstrom, and David Zellnik. The first series runs through May 17. The marathon continues through June 14. (549 W. 52nd St. 247-4982.)

The Fastest Clock in the Universe—The British playwright Philip Ridley's comedy about a vain thirty-year-old who celebrates his nineteenth birthday each year. A New Group production. Preview on May 6. Opens May 7 at 8. (INTAR, 420 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Miss Coco Peru's Liquid Universe—A comedy about a Bronx boy who makes a round-the-world journey in a wig and a dress. Written by and starring Clinton Leupp. Sundays at 8, through June 28. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391.)

Mr. Peters' Connections—Peter Falk returns to the stage to portray a retired pilot in Arthur Miller's new play. In previews. (Signature Theatre, 555 W. 42nd St. 244-7529.)

Nasty Little Secrets—A revised version of Lanie Robertson's play about the life and death of the playwright Joe Orton. In previews. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

Power Plays—Three one-act comedies written by and starring Elaine May and Alan Arkin, who are joined by Anthony Arkin and Jeannie Berlin. Presented by Manhattan Theatre Club. In previews. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

The Sea Gull—The Blue Light Theatre Company presents a staging of Chekhov's play, in a translation by Tom Stoppard. Maria Tucci, Angie Phillips, Greg Naughton, Alex Draper, and Mark Blum are in the cast. Previews begin May 8. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Aloha Las Vegas—A Pan Asian Rep staging of a play by Edward Sakamoto, about a Hawaiian widower who considers moving to Nevada. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 245-2660. Closes May 16.)

Alter Egos—A one-man show written and performed by Jon McGovern. Saturdays at 9:30. (Solo Arts Group, 36 W. 17th St. 591-2719.)

Art—Yasmina Reza's farce is a splendid vehicle for three masterly actors, Victor Garber, Alan Alda, and Alfred Molina. They portray friends whose fifteen-year relationship is threatened when one of them buys a large white canvas for two hundred thousand francs. Directed by Matthew Warchus. (Reviewed in our issue of 3/23/98.) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

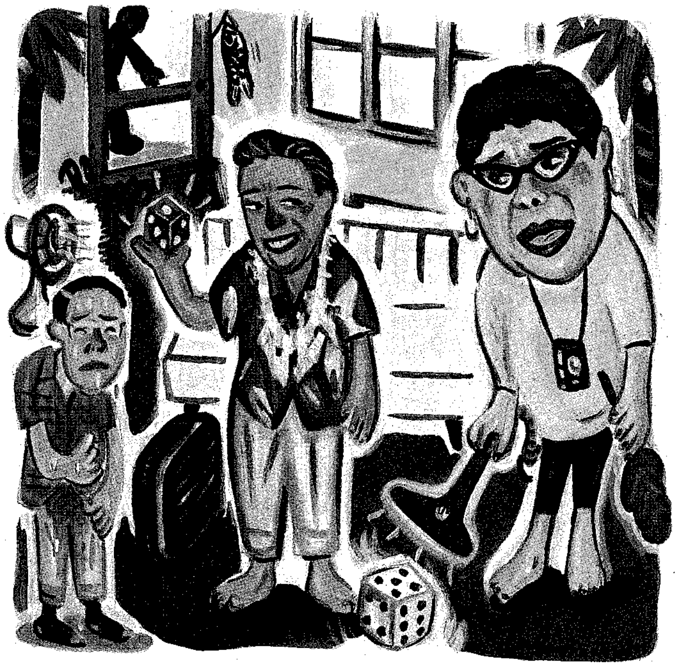
Bad Sex with Bud Kemp—A one-woman show about single life in New York, written and performed by Sandra Tsing Loh. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 787-3392. Closes May 10.)

The Beauty Queen of Leenane—The precocious Anglo-Irish playwright Martin McDonagh's riveting winter's tale, set in a rural Irish cottage, about an aged mother and her virgin forty-year-old daughter, who is trapped in a punishing solitude. It's a simple, primitive story, yet it is filled with complex emotional surprises and reversals. (3/16/98) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Bob—This Saratoga International Theatre Institute production, inspired by the work of avant-garde theatre director Robert Wilson, is the first production in the company's two-part exploration of American culture. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 460-5475.)

Bobby Supreme—The 29th Street Rep presents a play by J. B. Miller, about the downfall of an Andrew Dice Clay/Howard Stern-style comic. (212 W. 29th St. 465-0575.)

Bus Riley & Co.—The Willow Cabin Theatre Company presents five short plays by William Inge: "The Boy in the Basement," "The Tiny Closet," "Memory of Summer," "The Mall," and "Bus Riley's Back in Town." (Samuel Beckett Theatre, 412 W. 42nd St. 886-1889. Closes May 24.)



Les Mau, Ron Nakahara, and Kati Kuroda, in "Aloha Las Vegas."

TAKESHI TADATSU

Cabaret—This mesmerizing production of the Kander and Ebb musical doesn't have the high-gloss veneer of the celebrated movie version; here, the dancers at the Kit Kat Klub, the symbol of anything-goes Weimar Germany, look shell-shocked and stigmatized. As the Emcee, Alan Cumming is astonishing—with his bruised-looking body, his huge, knowing eyes, and his satanic energy, he's a spectacle of mixed messages. Natasha Richardson, as Sally Bowles, the role that made Liza Minnelli a star, casts a spectral glow. Directed by Sam Mendes. (4/6/98) (Kit Kat Klub, 124 W. 43rd St. 719-1300.)

The Chairs—The British troupe Théâtre de Complicité's superb staging of Ionesco's one-act tragic farce—in which two nonagenarians (played by the English comic veterans Richard Briers and Geraldine McEwan) act out the folly and fierce solitude of their dwindling days—has established finally and forever the indubitable poetry and genius of the play, written nearly half a century ago. Directed by Simon McBurney. (4/13/98) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Cripple of Inishmaan—Martin McDonagh's bittersweet comedy is probably his best play so far, but you'd never know it from Jerry Zaks's heavy-handed, drab production. Despite a stellar performance by Ruaidhri Conroy, who starred in the original National Theatre version, the show lies there like a lump of soda bread that didn't rise. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes May 17.)

The Deep Blue Sea—Blythe Danner and Edward Herrmann star in a revival of Terence Rattigan's 1952 drama. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300. Closes May 10.)

Degenerate Art—A collaborative work from the Irondale Ensemble Project which explores society's periodic fury over art. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 633-1292. Closes May 23.)

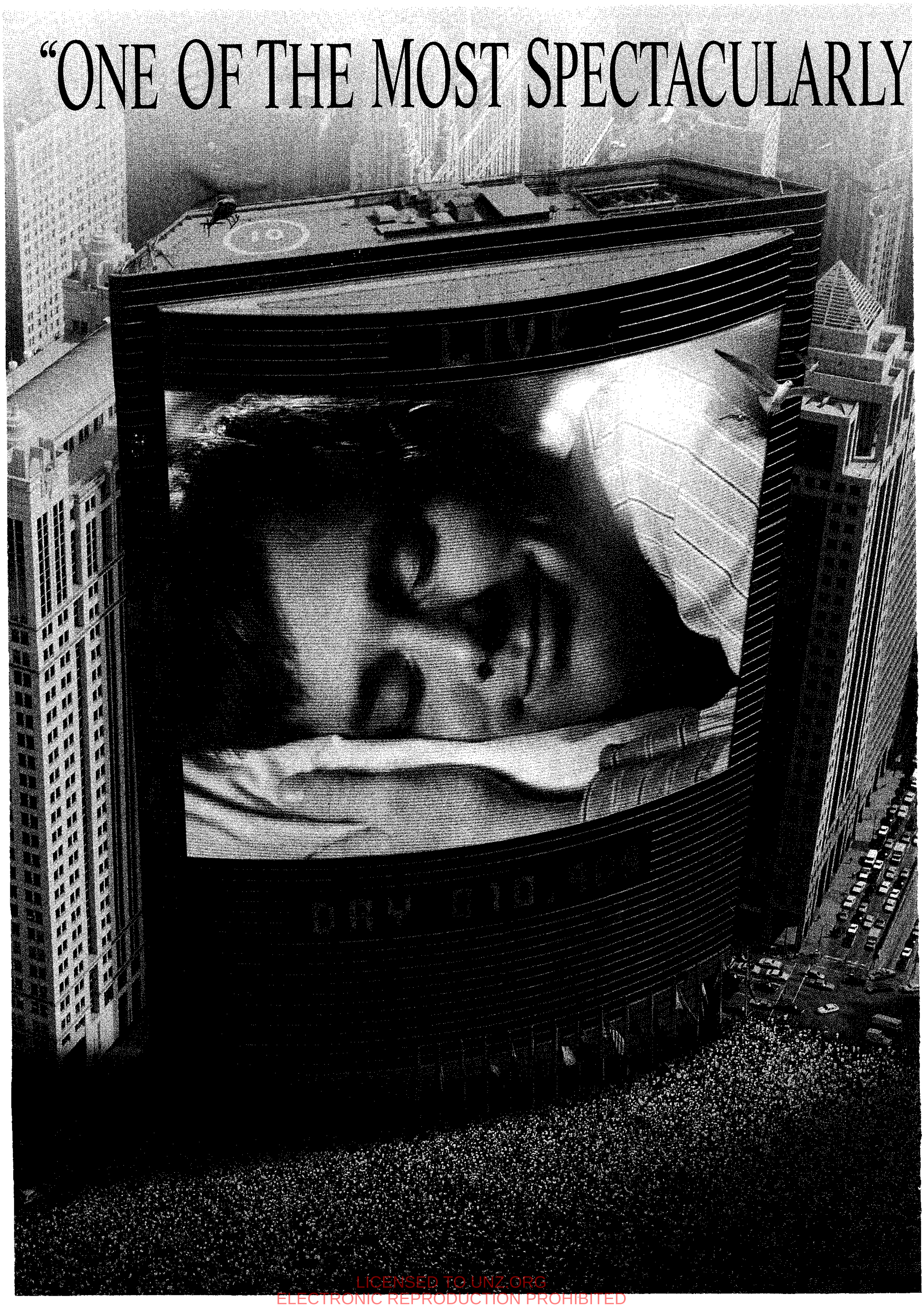
The Diary of Anne Frank—Theatrically, this reworking of the 1955 play by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett is an improvement, and the cast is fine. But the play's realism is its fundamental flaw: we can't really recreate for ourselves what Anne's dreadful situation was like. (12/15/97) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

A Flea in Her Ear—Bill Irwin's production of Georges Feydeau's 1907 farce can't live up to the fun of the script, which has been deftly and wittily co-adapted by Jean-Marie Besset and Mark O'Donnell. Part of the problem is the casting: the ensemble is quite young, and as a group the actors lack both the years and the swank necessary to carry off the vainglory for which the author punishes them. (3/23/98) (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 719-1300. Closes May 10.)

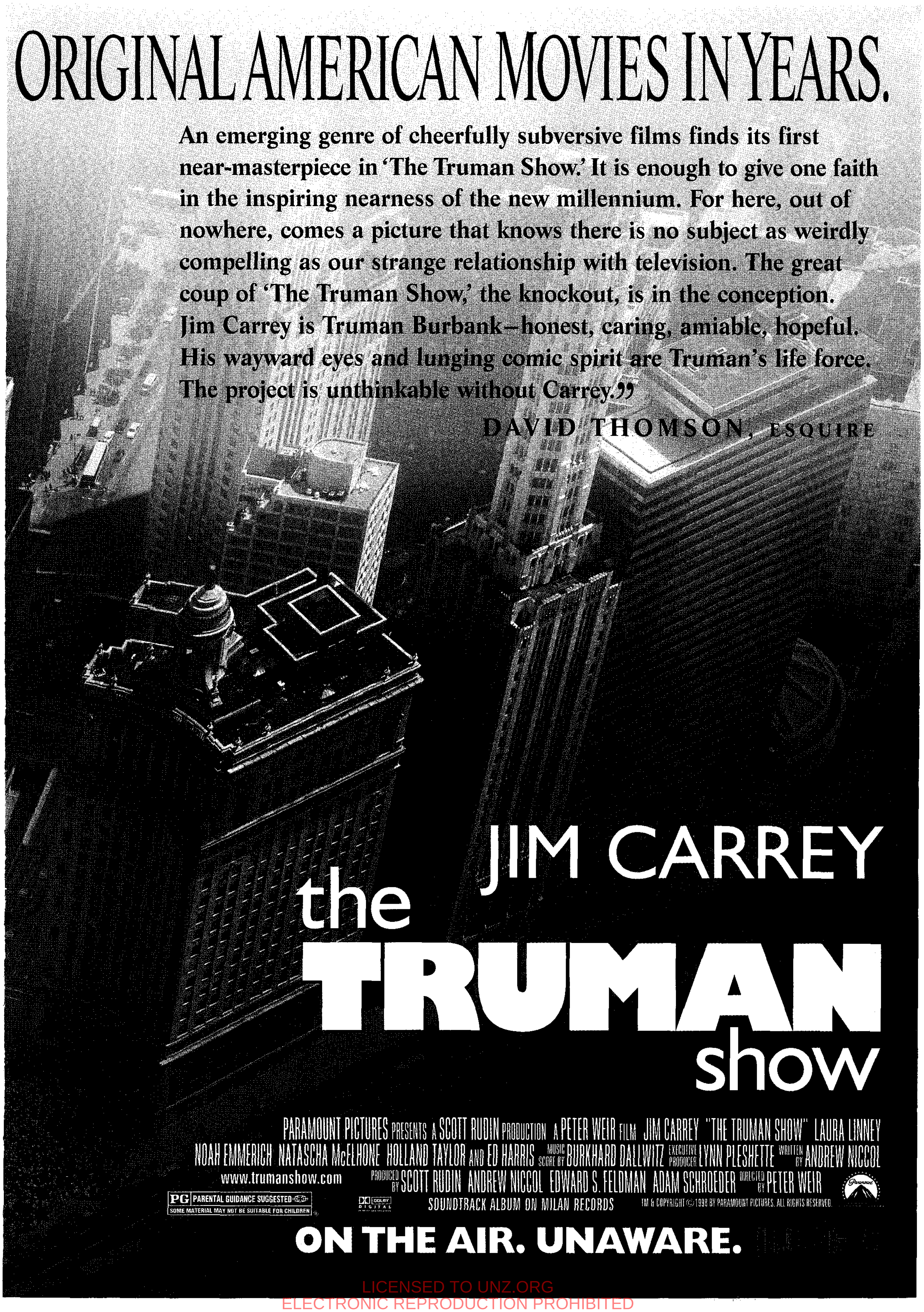
Freak—In his "pseudo-autobiographical" one-man show about growing up in New York, John Leguizamo takes the audience on a very funny breakneck jaunt down distorted-memory lane, beginning with the moment his parents conceived him, in Colombia. ("We left during that great plantain famine of the late sixties," he says.) He's a small guy, but his seemingly boneless body and boundless humor fill the large stage, and he absolutely charms, from start to finish. Di-

"THE MOVIE OF THE DECADE AND IT STARS JIM CARREY!"

ESQUIRE MAGAZINE



"ONE OF THE MOST SPECTACULARLY
LIVE



ORIGINAL AMERICAN MOVIES IN YEARS.

An emerging genre of cheerfully subversive films finds its first near-masterpiece in ‘The Truman Show.’ It is enough to give one faith in the inspiring nearness of the new millennium. For here, out of nowhere, comes a picture that knows there is no subject as weirdly compelling as our strange relationship with television. The great coup of ‘The Truman Show,’ the knockout, is in the conception. Jim Carrey is Truman Burbank—honest, caring, amiable, hopeful. His wayward eyes and lunging comic spirit are Truman’s life force. The project is unthinkable without Carrey.”

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ON THE AIR. UNAWARE.

rected by David Bar Katz. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

From Above—In Tom Donaghy's latest, a young woman in mourning is visited by a man who claims to be her dead husband. David Warren is the director. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes May 10.)

Golden Child—A graceful, affecting production of David Henry Hwang's 1996 drama. Set in both present-day Manhattan and in China in 1918, the play traces the impact of Christianity and Western ideas on one Chinese family over several generations while also exploring themes of individuality, assimilation, and cultural evolution. Hwang treats it all with wit and humor, so the evening is never heavy-handed. The cast, under the direction of James Lapine, is quite good, and the sets and costumes are simple and lovely. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Hedwig and the Angry Inch—Hedwig, as written and portrayed by John Cameron Mitchell, is a sweet transsexual singer from East Berlin, whose cabaret performance cum stadium act becomes a smart, funny, and very moving exploration of the redemptive, if perhaps fleeting, power of love. (Jane Street Theatre, Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200.)

High Society—A musical based on Philip Barry's play "The Philadelphia Story." With songs by Cole Porter and a book by Arthur Kopit. Christopher Renshaw is the director. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Honour—The life of a middle-aged poet (Jane Alexander) is turned upside down when a young journalist (Laura Linney) arrives to interview her writer husband (Robert Foxworth), in a drama by the Australian playwright Joanna Murray-Smith. Gerald Gutierrez is the director. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

How to Write While You Sleep—A slumberous young college dropout meets her ideal woman, in an absurdist comedy by Madeleine Olnek. (Soho Rep, 46 Walker St. 334-0962. Closes May 24.)

I Am My Own Cheap Thrill—It's a man's world, and Amanda Vogel has something to say about it in her one-woman show. Thursdays at 10:30. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

I Don't Know Who He Was and I Don't Know What He Said—The playwright Mac Wellman directs his one-man monologue—a rant by a Wall Street flimflam man—performed by Matthew Maguire. Fridays and Saturdays at 10. (Dixon Place, 258 Bowery, near Houston St. 219-3088. Closes May 9.)

Jails, Hospitals & Hip-Hop—Danny Hoch's new one-man show is a series of short monologues by characters concerned with at least one of the above. Mr. Hoch's versatility is astonishing, and at its best the show is a perceptive and very funny look into the marginal worlds of his characters. But some segments fall flat and others go on too long; on the whole, the evening should have been honed to a finer edge. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

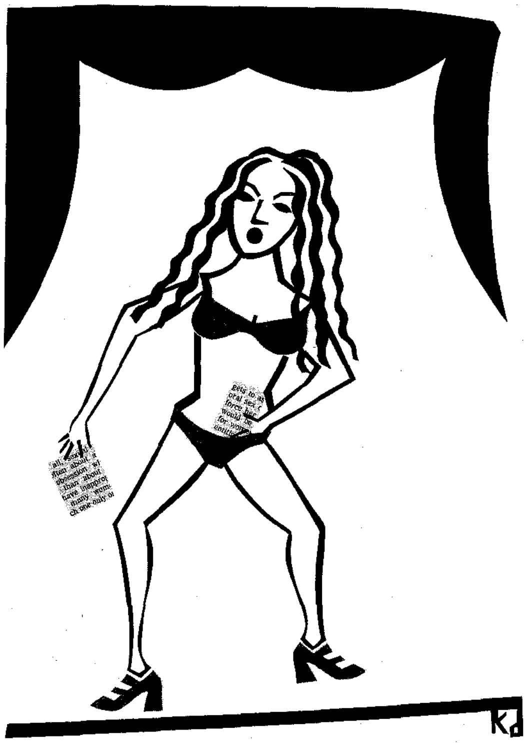
Joseph Gabriel Magic '98—Mr. Gabriel comes to New York by way of Las Vegas. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Judas Kiss—Liam Neeson portrays Oscar Wilde in David Hare's new drama, in a production by London's Almeida Theatre Company, directed by Richard Eyre. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Lion King—The director Julie Taymor's theatrical event is far more textured and original than the animated film; it's like being in a dream awake. The show's high visual style, however, is in sharp contrast to its low verbal one. (11/24/97) (New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

Marc Salem's Mindgames—The clairvoyant's fascinating "tricks" seem like magic, and at times you feel like you're the only person in the audience who isn't a plant. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.)

Miss Julie—Strindberg's tragedy is the Pearl Theatre Company's final production of the season. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802.)



Amanda Vogel, in "I Am My Own Cheap Thrill."

KIM DEMARCO

Never the Sinner—John Logan's 1985 play about Leopold and Loeb, the teen-age millionaires who murdered a child in Chicago in 1924, sweeps the audience into the boys' twisted friendship without losing sight of the sheer brutality of their "crime of the century"—a balancing act that Mr. Logan and the director, Ethan McSweeny, bring off beautifully. Jason Patrick Bowcutt and Michael Solomon are utterly convincing as the killers. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

The Old Neighborhood—David Mamet's three elegant, autobiographical one-act plays are serious, beautiful, and short—an almost impossible feat these days on Broadway. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Pieces of the Sky—A Jewish mailman in Nebraska during the Second World War is held in contempt for his role as the bearer of bad news and for his religion, in a drama by David L. Patterson. Robert Ari is in the cast. (28th Street Theatre, 15 W. 28th St. 421-1380.)

Quidam—The Montreal-based Cirque du Soleil continues to offer up the virtuosic feats of agility and daring for which it's known, but this latest production is more densely layered with abstract imagery and more challenging to the eye. It unfolds like a richly textured, loopy dream, the kind one might slip into after a Fellini-film marathon. All is magical and good in this universe (the headless man who vanishes into the fog with an umbrella is a serene rather than menacing figure; the fantastically costumed acrobats who fling themselves from hoops in the sky never fall), and enormous fun. (The big top at Battery Park City. For more information, call 800-678-5440.)

Ragtime—E. L. Doctorow's epic novel is transformed into a historical pageant. It's a big, brave, passionate gamble, masterfully directed by Frank Galati. (2/2/98) (Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.)

R & J—A promising, if not exactly new, idea—schoolboys escape regimentation and discover their own passion by performing "Romeo and Juliet"—yields a few gripping moments surrounded by a lot of overheated panting, shouting, and foot-stomping. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 354-2220.)

The Sound of Music—Rebecca Luker is enormously winning as Maria, and the seven children in the cast are mostly delightful, but the production doesn't linger in the memory; there may be music in those hills, but the producers didn't seem to find a whole lot of fresh air up there. Susan H. Schulman is the director. (4/6/98) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Sunshine Boys—A revival of Neil Simon's comedy about two irascible old vaudevillians, starring Ye Olde Odd Couple of television, Tony Randall and Jack Klugman. The sandpapery friction that the twosome showed on TV is now reduced to lovability. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Too Jewish Two—Avi Hoffman's salute to the original Borscht Belt comics, a sequel to "Too Jewish?" (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

Two Pianos, Four Hands—With the keyboardists Andrew Lippa and Jed Rees. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200. Closes May 10.)

Uncle Philip's Coat—An actor is plagued by memories of an uncle who escaped the Russian pogroms, in a one-man drama by Matty Selman. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797.)

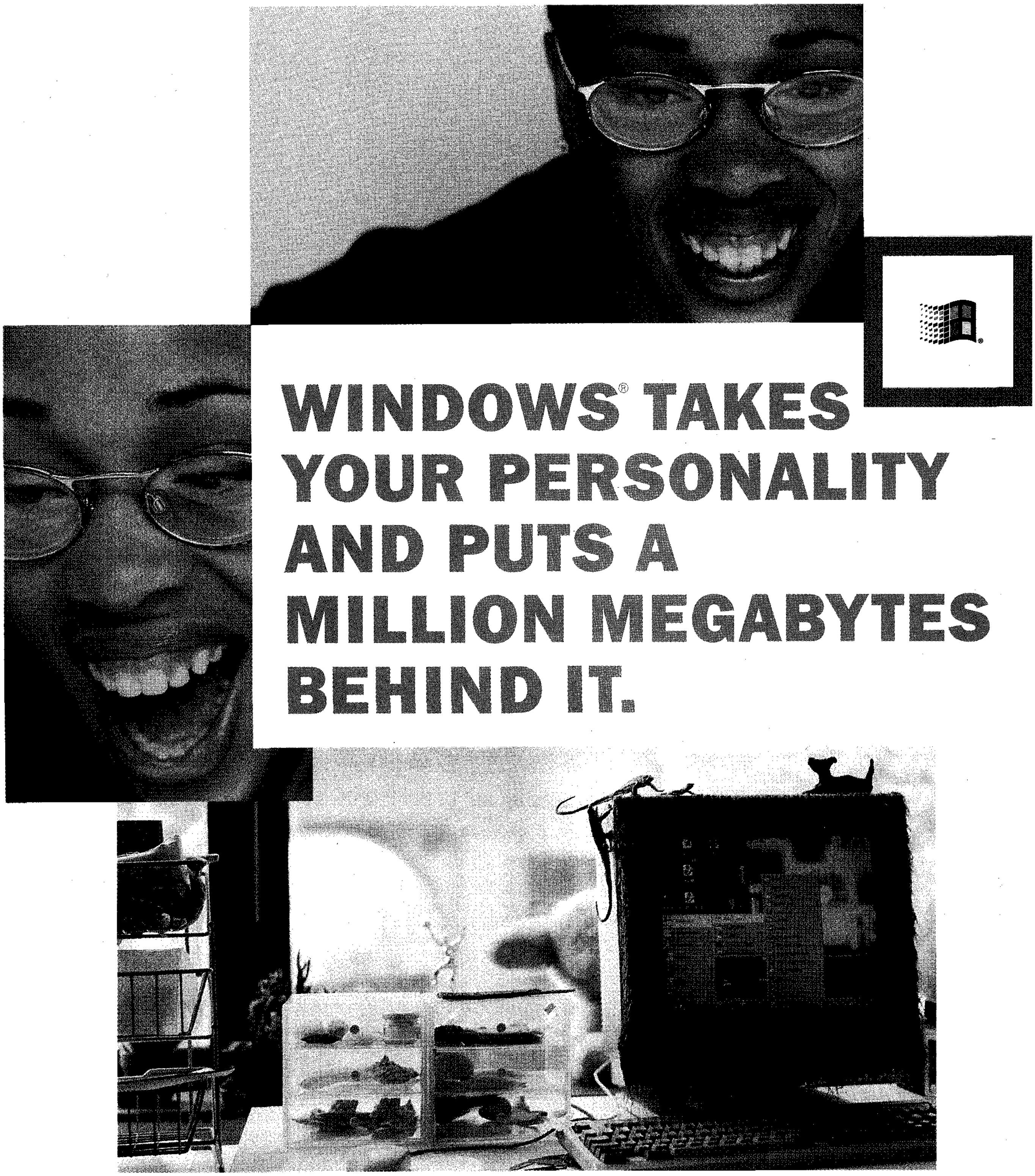
A View from the Bridge—The Roundabout Theatre's excellent revival of Arthur Miller's tragic story of the longshoreman Eddie Carbone and his obsession with his orphaned niece. (1/5/98) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Visiting Mr. Green—Eli Wallach finds great dignity in the title character, an eighty-six-year-old Jewish widower, in Jeff Baron's sweet if predictable Upper West Side comedy. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-0700.)

Wait Until Dark—Marisa Tomei and Quentin Tarantino star in a revival of Frederick Knott's 1966 suspense drama. Leonard Foglia is the director. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

LONG RUNS

AS BEES IN HONEY DROWN: Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200. . . . **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **BRING IN DA NOISE, BRING IN DA FUNK:** Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CHICAGO:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY STRIKES BACK!:** Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GROSS INDECENCY: THE THREE TRIALS OF OSCAR WILDE:** Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000. . . . **HOWARD CRABTREE'S WHEN PIGS FLY:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE:** Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200. . . . **JEKYLL & HYDE:** Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE LAST NIGHT OF BALLYHOO:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **LATE NITE CATECHISM:** St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE LIFE:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **RENT:** Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000. . . . **THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . .



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1776: Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **SMOKEY JOE'S CAFÉ:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **TITANIC:** Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4100. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 239-6200.

DANCE

New York City Ballet—May 6 at 8: "Square Dance," "Variations on a Nursery Song," and "Union Jack." . . ¶ May 7 at 8: "Bournonville Divertissements," "Two and Three Part Inventions," and "Tchaikovsky Suite No. 3." . . ¶ May 8 at 8: "Ash," "Zakouski," "Variations on a Nursery Song," and "Symphony in C." . . . ¶ May 9 at 2: "Square Dance," "Prodigal Son," and "The Four Temperaments." . . . ¶ May 9 at 8: "Walpurgisnacht Ballet," "Opus 19/The Dreamer," and "Union Jack." . . . ¶ May 10 at 3: "Walpurgisnacht Ballet," "Zakouski," "Prodigal Son," and "Stravinsky Violin Concerto." . . . ¶ May 12 at 8: "Le Tombeau de Couperin," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," "Variations on a Nursery Song," and "Bournonville Divertissements." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through June 28.)

American Ballet Theatre—The company kicks off its Metropolitan Opera House season with the spring gala (May 11 at 7), followed by the first performance of "The Merry Widow" (May 12 at 8). (For tickets, call 362-6000. Through July 4.)

Parsons Dance Company—May 5 at 7:30, May 7 and May 9 at 8, and May 10 at 3: "Mood Swing," "Nascimento," "Closure," "Caught," and "Anthem." . . . ¶ May 6 and May 8 at 8 and May 9 at 2: "Ring Around the Rosie," "Caught," "Bachiana," "Instinct," and "Closure." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Jennifer Muller/The Works—The ten-member company in repertory work and the première of "Degas Revisited," "Red Fence," and "Periphery," among others. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. May 5 at 7:30, May 6-9 at 8, and May 10 at 2 and 7:30.)

"War with the Newts"—Has nothing to do with the Speaker of the House but is based instead on the 1936 Karel Capek novel about a salamanderlike race that takes over the world only to become an "X-Files"-style media sensation. Brooklyn-based choreographer Stephan Koplowitz has cast high-school students as well as professional dancer-actors, as part of Dance Theatre Workshop's mentoring program. "At first the students were, like, 'I don't know if I can do this,'" Koplowitz says. "But now they're calling me up and lobbying for bigger parts. I guess, whatever I've been doing, it's working." (219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. May 7-9 at 8 and May 10 at 3. Through May 17.)

"Joint Motion/Improvisation"—Two companies, David Dorfman Dance and Mark Taylor's Dance Alloy, join forces for an evening of improvisation. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. May 10 at 8:30.)

Martha at Mother—Richard Move, in Halston knockoffs designed for his six-foot-three-inch version of Martha Graham, hosts the final dance showcases of the season. (Mother, 875 Washington St. 642-5005. May 6 at 8 and 10 and May 7 at 8.)

Soundance Repertory Company—New works for the nine-member company by Sean Curran, Heidi Latsky, Lonne Moretton, Chris DC Ramos, Allyson Green, and company founder Sandra Stratton-Gonzalez. (Joyce SoHo, 155 Mercer St. 334-7479. May 7 at 7:30, May 8-9 at 8, and May 10 at 7.)

"These Women"—Amy Pivar presents a dance drama about a woman reviewing her own life after the death of a friend. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202. May 6-9 at 8 and May 10 at 3. Through May 23.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

"Mother's Day with Christina Crawford"—In which the celebrated Hollywood victim child remembers Mama all too well. With performances by Lypsinka (as Mommie Joan) and Reno. The finale is a screening of "Mommie Dearest." Go, Faye! (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. May 6 at 7.)

Foo Fighters—Two albums and five years after he became a public figure as the drummer for Nirvana, Dave Grohl—who now sings, plays guitar, and wears Prada—has finally proved himself a legitimate (if unremarkable) rock songwriter. (Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 307-7171. May 7 at 7:30.)

Loreena McKennitt—McKennitt specializes in sombre Celtic folk music with a mystical Middle Eastern varnish. Bouzoukis are delicately plucked, tablas chatter, and McKennitt's beautiful voice quivers like a Druid high priestess's. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. May 7 at 8.)

"Highlights in Jazz"—With a contingent of dyed-in-the-wool beboppers in attendance, including trumpeter Jon Faddis, saxophonist Jimmy Heath, trombonist Slide Hampton, pianist Cyrus Chestnut, and bassist Ray Drummond, the Pace Theatre may take on all the trappings of, say, the original Birdland club on a torrid night in 1956; for her part, the cool-school singer Chris Connor can turn any room into an elegant East Side nightspot. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. May 7 at 8.)

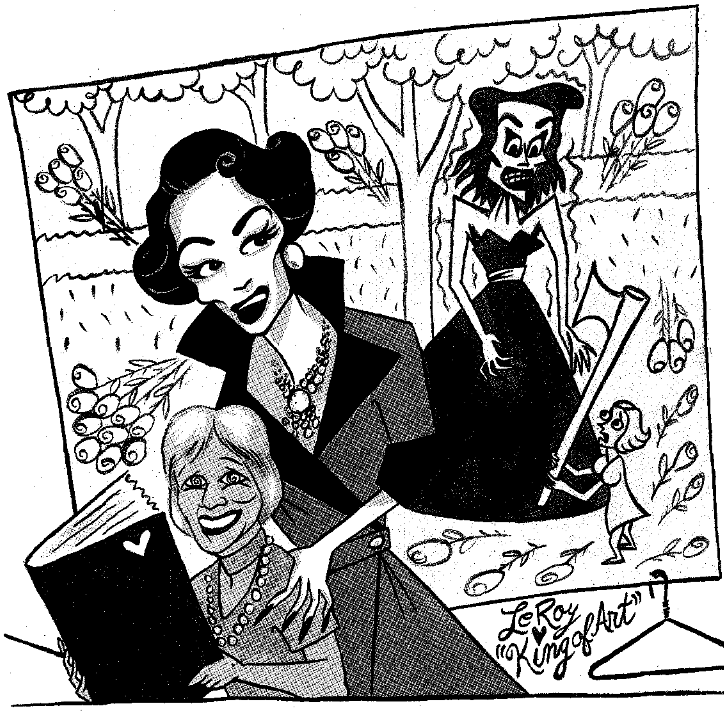
Bonnie Raitt—With her fifteenth album, "Fundamental," this show-tune singer's daughter has finally travelled back to her pre-"Nick of Time" roots. Knowing that you'll probably never have another four-million-selling record can apparently be good for the soul: "Fundamental" is an exquisitely performed and recorded collection of tasteful songs and searing guitar work, and it's as comfortable and weathered as an old shoe. With Keb' Mo', a deft blues guitarist and singer who brings to mind the young Taj Mahal. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. May 8-10 at 8.)

Orquesta Revé—The seminal Cuban salsa band, founded in 1956 by the percussionist Elio Revé, who died last year in a car accident at the age of sixty-seven. (See also S.O.B.'s, in Clubs.) (Hostos Center, 450 Grand Concourse, the Bronx. 718-518-4455. May 9 at 7:30.)

"Love Songs '98"—The Stylistics, one of the greatest R. & B. bands of all time, hosts a party with the Dramatics and the Chi-Lites. (Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 864-0372. May 9 at 8.)

Mahrajan al-Fan: Fourth Festival of Arab World Culture—Featuring the charismatic Syrian vocalist Sabah Fakhri and the Lebanese poets Zaghloul Al-Damour and Fayez El Mograbi. (Town Hall. May 9 at 8:30.)

Björk—If this Icelandic banshee evolves any faster, she may leave terra firma behind. On last year's "Homogenic," she evoked as yet unheard soundscapes and drum patterns that seem to issue directly from her daydreams. It's a brilliant, often challenging record, but to judge from its tepid reception, it's not a voyage many were willing to take. Onstage, she anchors her sonic musings with a little old-fashioned rock grit. (Hammerstein Ballroom, Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 564-4882. May 11-12 at 8.)



Christina Crawford and Lypsinka remember Mommie Dearest, at Town Hall.

LEROY "KING OF ART"

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—May 8-9: **BO DIDDLEY.** Those pounding tom-toms, those sinewy maracas, that distorted, fuse-blowing guitar. Call it hambone; call it shave and a haircut, two bits; call it anything you want—it's still going to be the Bo Diddley beat. And once it gets you in its clutches it's impossible to shake loose. With veteran keyboardist **AL KOOPER.**

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—May 11: **GRANT LEE BUFFALO,** the brainchild of Grant Lee Phillips, a guitarist and singer who is one of the canniest (and most indefinable) songwriters in rock. Dining.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—May 6-7: **PROJEKCT TWO:** Guitarist Robert Fripp, the progressive-rock leviathan, returns with yet another venturesome ensemble. This time, Fripp's longtime foil, guitarist Adrian Belew, plays drums. Bassist and Stick player Trey Gunn rounds out the bottom end.

AVALON

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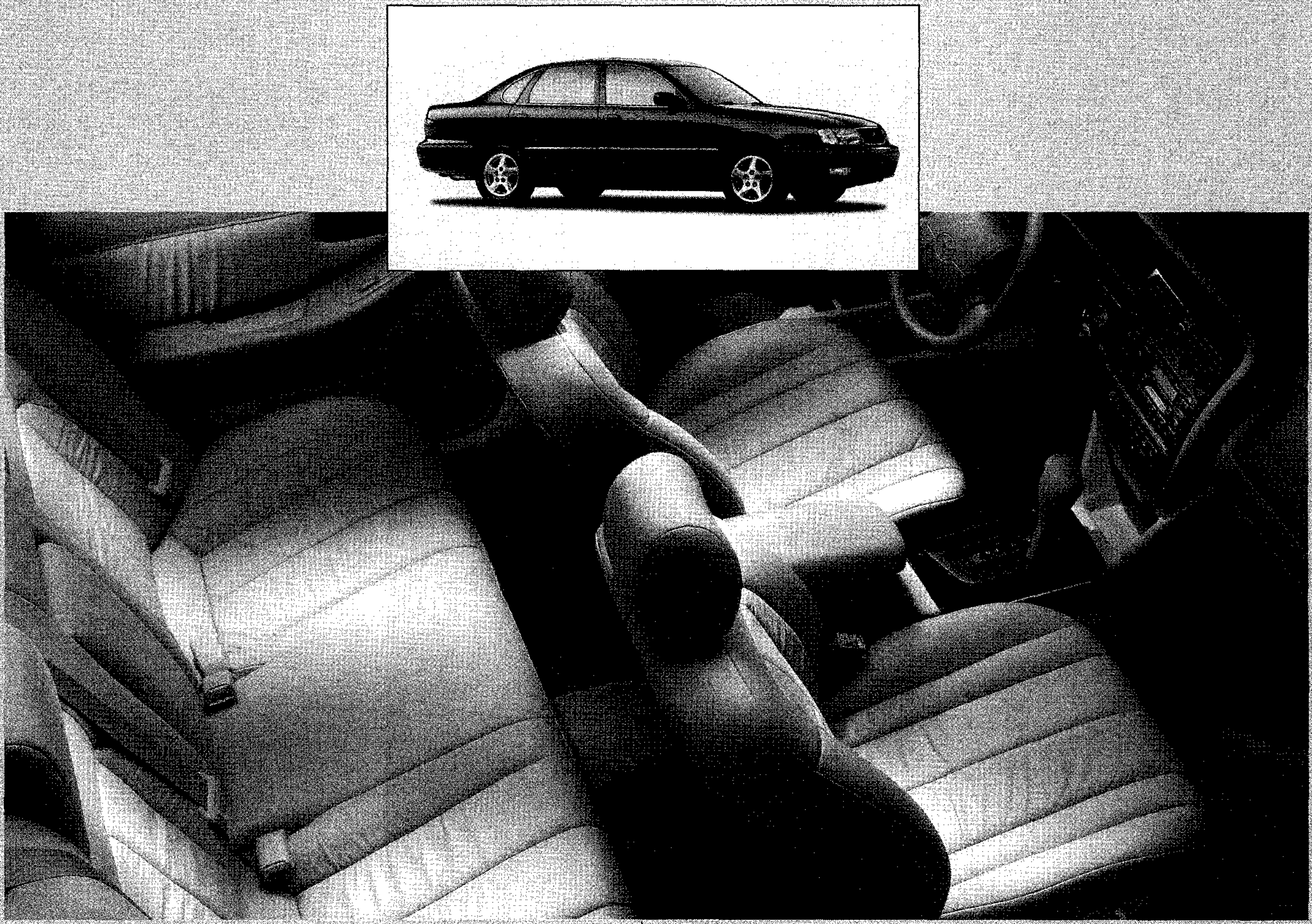
Settle in. And settle down. Then feel the space around you embrace, comfort and ease both body and soul. Before you

of solitary

know it, your entire being has just breathed a collective sigh of relief. And to think, you have yet to make it halfway home.

confinement.



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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—May 8-10: **KRISTIN HERSH,** the former Throwing Muses madrigal, now a well-adjusted mommy, plays an all-acoustic set.

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—May 7: He may be best known as the guy in Jewel's "You Were Meant for Me" video (one of many songs he co-wrote with the famous Alaskan folkie), but **STEVE POLTZ** is a gem himself. On "One Left Shoe," the leader of the Rugburns, a band admired for its often corny Jonathan Richman-meets-Paul Westerberg wistfulness, turns in an unexpectedly mature collection of forlorn ballads. Live, Poltz is an inventive performer and unpredictable raconteur.

Rodeo Bar, 375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (683-6500)—Wild-man guitarist **BILL KIRCHEN** holds forth on May 6; rockabilly queen **KIM LENZ** and her **JAGUARS** take over on May 7.

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—May 7: **BASEMENT BHANGRA,** an evening of ecstatic, futuristic dance music which fuses an ancient Punjabi harvest festival with the technological wonders of underground London. May 11: The Cuban salsa ensemble **ORQUESTA REVÉ** (see Concerts).

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—May 7: **TORTOISE,** the equally revered and reviled post-rock experimental ensemble from Chicago. With **OVAL.** May 8: **CLARENCE (GATEMOUTH) BROWN / KOKO TAYLOR.** Like virtually every other Texas blues guitarist of the past half-century, the seventy-four-year-old Brown owes much to T-Bone Walker, but unlike his fellow-disciples, he's always sought to expand the vocabulary of the blues, mixing in elements of country, Cajun, and jazz. And, when he picks up that electric fiddle, watch out. / As the reigning Queen of the Blues, Taylor's won more W. C. Handy Awards than any other female blues performer—and at sixtysomething she can still shake a rafter or two. May 9: Guitarist **LINK WRAY,** who, in 1958, decided to punch a pencil through his amplifier speakers; the result was the landmark instrumental "Rumble," which gave birth to one of rock's enduring staples: the power chord. With **SOUTHERN CULTURE ON THE SKIDS,** a group of psychobilly swamp rockers from Chapel Hill whose songs are populated with characters that would have frightened Carson McCullers—there's lots of fried chicken, go-go dancing, and bear wrestling.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—May 8-9: **LEE (SCRATCH) PERRY,** the veteran Jamaican dub specialist and studio wizard. With the **MAD PROFESSOR.** The excellent East London drum-and-bass duo **SPRING HEEL JACK** will d.j. between performances. On May 11, noted Broadway performers Alice Ripley ("Sideshow") and Michael Cerveris ("Titanic") resurrect their alt-pop band, **LAME.**

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—**TITO PUENTE AND HIS LATIN JAZZ ENSEMBLE** have the floor through May 10. Puente, the grand old man of salsa, loves his jazz, too. Rhythmic excitement is guaranteed: this guy's timbales could make a polka band swing.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through May 10: Trumpeter **MAYNARD FERGUSON AND BIG BOP NOUVEAU.** Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—**BOBBY SHORT** has settled in for a two-month stay. . . . ¶ Across the hall, pianist **BARBARA CARROLL** is in charge at Bemelmans Bar.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through May 10: Contemporary jazz singing has its doyenne (Betty Carter) and its rebel (Cassandra Wilson), but whether **NNENNA FREELON** will inhabit the currently vacant sleek-stylist spot is still an open question. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator **LES PAUL.**

Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—Through May 9: The **GARY BARTZ** quartet. The return of saxophonist Bartz is a feel-good tale for the nineties: a comer from the glory days of the late sixties returns, his powers intact, with a solid commitment to straight-ahead swing. On an inspired night, when he feels like parading his harmonic knowledge and his dive-bomber drive, Bartz can be staggering.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—May 6: **ANDREW CYRILLE** can play the drums inside, outside, and upside down; there isn't a rhythm or a formal ploy that the man hasn't mastered. With him are two equally studied and eclectic players: saxophonist **OLIVER LAKE** and bassist **REGGIE WORKMAN.** May 7: The **DAN ROSE** trio, featuring drummer **VICTOR LEWIS.** May 8: Guitarist **MARC RIBOT** is in with his latest project, **LOS CUBANOS POSTISOS.**

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through May 10: The **BILLY HARPER** quintet. The seventies had their share of Coltrane-inspired tenorists with imperious tones and volcanic energy, but something—poetry, perhaps—always set Harper apart. His recent work with Randy Weston and with his own electrifying group has proved that he's still in touch with the muse. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—While not exactly the contemporary versions of Lester Young and Billie Holiday, tenor saxophonist **HOUSTON PERSON** and vocalist **ETTA JONES** (through May 10) continue to make fetching music together—a tradition that started more than twenty-five years ago. Both are sophisticated stylists and also blues people, unashamed to roll in the funk when the mood strikes.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through May 9: **KEN PEPLOWSKI** (clarinet, tenor saxophone), **MICHAEL MOORE** (bass), and **HOWARD ALDEN** (guitar). Dining.

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON PRESENTS

Garrowby Hill (detail), 1998. Oil on canvas. 60"x76". © 1998, David Hockney.

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MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—"American Ingenuity." Wrap dresses, zippers, pockets—these were the democratic inventions that revolutionized sportswear in the thirties and forties. As Parisian influence declined during wartime, American designers like Anne Klein, Claire McCardell, and Bill Blass outfitted newly dynamic women Stateside. The Jet Age inspired work-to-evening outfits, and the rise of another American original—the teenager—begat a whole new fashion demographic (see Emily Wilkens's sly version of the little black dress, with removable lace collar). At the Costume Institute, through Aug. 16. . . . ¶ "Ellsworth Kelly on the Roof," an installation of large-scale metal sculptures on the Cantor roof garden. . . . ¶ "Augustin Pajou, Royal Sculptor." Through May 24. . . . ¶ "Pierre-Paul Prud'hon (1758-1823)." Through June 7. . . . ¶ "When Silk Was Gold: Central Asian and Chinese Textiles in the Metropolitan and Cleveland Museums of Art." Through May 17. . . . ¶ "Paul Strand Circa 1916." Through May 31. . . . ¶ "The Nature of Islamic Ornament, Part One: Calligraphy." Through June 28. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

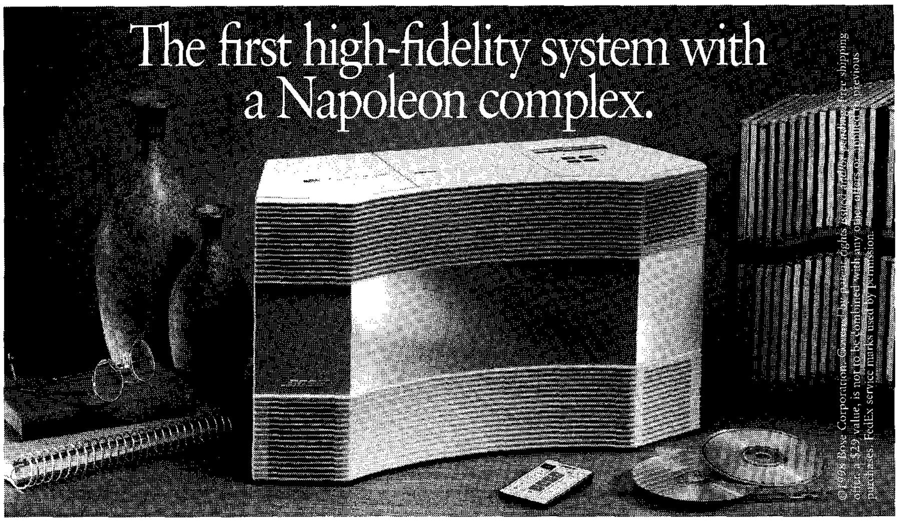
Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Two shows, the Chuck Close retrospective and "Artists and Subjects: Picasso to Stella," examine strategies of twentieth-century portraiture. Through May 26 and May 25, respectively. . . . ¶ "Alvar Aalto: Between Humanism and Materialism," a centennial exhibition that includes sketches, photographs, and maquettes of architectural projects by the Finnish modernist. Through May 19. . . . ¶ A retrospective of the works of Fernand Léger follows the metamorphoses of the French painter (1881-1955), from Fauvist to Cubist to Social Realist. Through May 12. . . . ¶ "The Clutter of Happenstance: Photographs by Robert Cumming." Through June 23. . . . ¶ Twenty-six recently acquired photographs by Garry Winogrand are on view. Through May 31. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 6; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—"China: 5,000 Years" is an impressive survey of art in nearly every medium; it includes some of the country's greatest masterpieces. The exhibition ranges from the Neolithic to the dynastic era and has no particular focus; with works of this quality, however, no one's complaining. Through June 3. . . . ¶ "Visions of Paris: Robert Delaunay's Series." Through May 24. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500)—"A Century in Crisis" comprises the contemporary portion of the institution's blockbuster exhibition "China: 5,000 Years." Through May 25. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—The current Bill Viola retrospective is quite a feat of installation, incorporating sound and image in complex, quasi-sculptural settings. Through May 10. . . . ¶ The face-lift for the museum's permanent-collection galleries is now complete, with the expanded quarters serving as the new home for key works by Hopper, O'Keeffe, and Calder. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

Brooklyn Museum of Art, Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—"Jewels of the Romanovs: Treasures of the Russian Imperial Court" presents crown jewels and other baubles, including the most famous sapphire in the world (before Kate Winslet's), a 260-carat specimen given by Alexander II to his wife. Through July 5. . . . ¶ "Mexican Prints from



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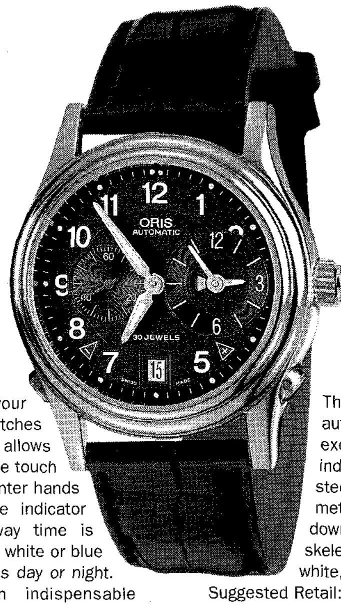

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the Collection of Reba and Dave Williams" includes examples from Kahlo, Orozco, Rivera, Siqueiros, and Tamayo. Through Aug. 10. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays, 11 to 9; and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Dahesh Museum, 601 Fifth Ave., at 49th St. (759-0606)—"Training an Artist: Alexandre Cabanel and the Academic Process in Nineteenth Century France" sets a recent acquisition (Cabanel's "The Death of Moses," from 1851) beside contemporaneous works created by students competing for the French Academy's Prix de Rome: demi-nudes by Benouville and Naudin, portrait studies by Bouguereau, and preparatory paintings by sundry and forgotten artists for what was then considered the pinnacle of artistic ambition: the painting of historical subjects. Through June 13. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6.)

Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St. (989-5912)—"'Prologue' x 18^3," the first in a two-part, site-specific installation by Robert Irwin, an artist associated with the California Light and Space movement, which also included James Turrell and Larry Bell. Irwin selected the third-floor galleries of Dia to exploit the extensive natural light: with translucent scrims, he divided the space into a warren of smaller rooms and incorporated simple electric fixtures into his scheme of ambiguous ambient light. The variety of perceptual experiences created by this seemingly simple deployment of scrims and lighting is amazing. Through June 14. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St. (534-1672)—"Berenice Abbott's Changing New York, 1935-1939" presents photographs from the heyday of arts funding, when the former darkroom assistant for Man Ray returned to New York and indulged her passion for the city from the South Street waterfront to the outer boroughs. Through June 21. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

William Beckman and **Kent Bellows**—Two highly accomplished draftsmen with different approaches to the human figure. Beckman's charcoal drawings, self-portraits, and double portraits possess palpable graphic power and psychological insight. Bellows's figure drawings in graphite are wrought with an astonishingly fine technique. In a portrait of a young man, the shadows on the cracked plaster wall behind the subject are rendered with the same precision as the smoothly modelled skin and individual hairs and whiskers. Dry and academic, but Bellows's bravura display of technique is mighty impressive. Through May 9. (Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 355-4545.)

Kurt Kren—This exhibition, though not as comprehensive as the current Actionist show at Baron Boisanté (see below), is remarkable for a video compilation of Kren's mesmerizing (and misogynist) quick-cut films, in particular, his supergross "Mama and Papa" (1964), which spawned disciples like Paul McCarthy and Mike Kelley. In the back room are clinically elegant photos of the late Rudolf Schwarzkogler's cleverly faked auto-penectomy—which gave rise to art's own urban legend. Through June 13. (Gat, 1100 Madison Ave., at 82nd St. 327-0441.)

George Negroponte—Abstract Expressionism reinvented in muted colors and cool gestures. Despite their deliberate flatness, even seeming dullness, these oils radiate light and emotion. The splatters and broad strokes of "Conspire," drawing on a dingy palette reminiscent of hospital interiors, create an atmosphere of airy repose which is worlds apart from any art-historical associations. Through May 23. (McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. 319-1996. Open Mondays.)

ONLY CONNECT

Fastball (http://www.fastball.com)—It's a given that major-league baseball ain't about the home-town fans anymore, and the dismantling of last year's Florida Marlins soon after they'd won the World Series is just the latest piece of evidence. With each passing year, geography's importance to team loyalty diminishes. But consider the plight of, say, the San Francisco Giants fan living in New York. He can't see his team until they come to Shea Stadium; the West Coast games finish too late to make the morning papers; and the local news doesn't give complete out-of-town scores. This is where the Web comes in handy: while the rest of the sports world is busy following the side-by-side rush of the Red Sox and the Yankees, said Giants fan can find the information he wants on-line.

Fastball may not have the big-brand-name appeal of its competitors (ESPNET's SportsZone, CBS's SportsLine), but in a game that is big-brand-named out, that can be seen as a good thing. After all, the rejection of the ongoing corporatization of baseball is more than a fan's right; it's his duty. (Learn from St. Louis Cardinal Mark McGwire's example: when he heard that McDonald's had designated a section of Busch Stadium's upper-deck stands Big Mac Land, the slugger declared that he never eats Big Macs because he hates the special sauce.) Fastball mixes Associated Press coverage with a steady diet of stats and scores, as well as field reports and regular columns by Dave Baker and I. J. Rosenberg. It was Baker who alerted us to the eight-dollar-beer phenomenon at the Arizona Diamondbacks' blatantly named Bank One Park; Rosenberg interviewed former Yankee Ron Blomberg on being baseball's first designated hitter. ("A writer from *Sports Illustrated* once told me it is something they can never take away from me," said Blomberg. Uh, Ron? No one wants it.) Best of all, that Giants fan can get instantaneous score updates as well as words of wisdom from manager Dusty Baker without ever having to see Orel Hershiser in a San Francisco uniform.

"Actionism"—Kurt Kren, along with Guenter Brus, Otto Muehl, Hermann Nitsch, Rudolf Schwarzkogler, and a bevy of anonymous women (plus the occasional infant or cat), comprised the Viennese Actionists, an outlaw collective dedicated to "direct art": orgies of foodstuffs and feces and tentative forays into self-mutilation. The hilarious and sickening results (captured in film and photograph) inspired followers from Monty Python to Chris Burden. Despite flashes of beauty, most of the films look like really bad porn, though "Oh Sensibility" (1970) recalls Jack Smith's cult classic "Flaming Creatures"—until Muehl (or his accomplice) murders a goose. As a whole, the show is poignant for its clumsy attempts at purging Germanic inhibitions, especially postwar guilt. Through June 13. (Baron Boisanté, 50 W. 57th. 581-9191.)

Short List—**james barsness,** Adams, 41 W. 57th St. 644-5665. Through May 9. . . . **claudio bravo,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. 541-4900. Open Mondays; through May 30. . . . **paul cadmus,** DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 247-2111. Through June 19. . . . **stuart davis** and **gaston lachaise,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606. Open Mondays; through May 30. . . . **jane freilicher,** DeNagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 262-5050. Through May 29. . . . **marsden hartley,** Babcock, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 767-1852. Through June 20. . . . **howard hodgkin,** Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. 744-2313. Through June 13. . . . **rebecca horn,** Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. 977-7160. Open Mondays; through June 13. . . . **alfredo jaar,** Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. 315-0470. Through June 13. . . . **per kirkeby,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. 988-1623. Open Mondays; through May 30. . . . **albert marquet,** Wildenstein, 19 E. 64th St. 879-0500. Open Mondays; through May 23. . . . **reginald marsh,** ACA Galleries, 41 E. 57th St. 644-8300. Through May 30. . . . **isamu noguchi,** Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. 421-3292. Through June 26. . . . **joan snyder,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St. 535-8810. Through June 12. . . . **nicolas de stael,** Cadé, 1045 Madison Ave., at 79th St. 734-3670. Through June 20. . . . **albert york,** Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St. 838-0333. Through June 12.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Win Knowlton—A poetic serenity fills this show of fanciful sculptures and works on paper. In the front room, a flock of brightly painted papier-mâché birds forages on a patchwork of worn Persian carpets; elsewhere, glittering cloud shapes of galvanized steel hang suspended from the ceiling. In the center of the gallery, a pair of plaster tree stumps, identified as bird baths, confers a weight and balance to this elegant meditation on earthly delights. Through May 9. (Maynes, 529 W. 20th St. 741-3318.)

Michael Kvium—An intriguing show of oil paintings by a Danish artist. The pictures feature mutant homunculi engaged in a variety of unsavory activities. Kvium's works are very much in the Nordic tradition of gloom and despair; that is their strength. Through May 9. (DCA Gallery, 525 W. 22nd St. 255-5511.)

"Three Catholics"—Works by an unlikely trio of communicants: Warhol, Ruscha, and Mapplethorpe. Through June 27. (Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. 242-7727.)

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Short List—**ghada amer,** Nosei, 530 W. 22nd St. 741-8695. Through May 20. . . . **polly apfelbaum,** D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. 352-9460. Through June 6. . . . **siah armajani,** Protetch, 511 W. 22nd St. 633-6999. Through May 13. . . . **liesbeth bik and jos van der pol,** Greene Naftali, 526 W. 26th St. 463-7770. Through June 30. . . . **munro galloway,** DeChiara Stewart, 521 W. 26th St. 967-6007. Through June 6. . . . **michel gerard,** De Folin, 529 W. 20th St. 242-3434. Through June 6. . . . **betty goodwin,** Shainman, 513 W. 20th St. 645-1701. Through May 16. . . . **pamela harris,** Kirkland, 504 W. 22nd St. 627-3930. Through June 6. . . . **anish kapoor,** Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. 206-9300. Through May 22. . . . **ellsworth kelly,** Marks, 523 W. 24th St. 243-0200. Through June 20. . . . **janice krasnow,** Martz, 529 W. 20th St. 206-3686. Through May 23. . . . **ree morton,** Alexander and Bonin, 132 Tenth Ave., at 18th St. 367-7474. Through June 6. . . . **charles olson,** Bibro, 529 W. 20th St. 647-7030. Through May 23. . . . **buzz spector,** Cristinerose, 529 W. 20th St. 206-0297. Through May 9. . . . **chris wilder,** Kreps, 529 W. 20th St. 741-8849. Through May 9.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Robert Colescott—Recent work by the septuagenarian firebrand, who was the first African-American to show solo at the Venice Biennale. His Pop-ish paintings include "The White Man Blues" (1994), a Technicolor parable of miscegenation, poverty, and guilt. His drawings are quicker, and better. Through May 31. (Kind, 136 Greene St. 925-1200.)

Walton Ford—Large watercolors of animals (an Indo-Chinese tiger, a colony of auks) which evoke Audubon, Brueghel, and the Hudson River School, period styles that serve as playing fields for historical ironies: the tiger's stripes hide profiles of Vietnamese rulers, and quotations from Casanova, de Sade, and other Enlightenment figures surround the birds—a reference to the era's luxurious auk-feather beds. Through May 23. (Kasmin, 74 Grand St. 219-3219.)

Catherine Murphy—Meticulously rendered oils of solidly familiar subjects (a plastic wading pool, a brooch, a ladder on gravel, a couple of bags of trash) that nevertheless achieve a jarring effect, as if someone snapped a flashbulb at something you had been staring at distractedly for some minutes. Through May 22. (Lennon, Weinberg, 560 Broadway. 941-0012.)

Jack Pierson—Wall-mounted sculptures composed of found letters from old street signage. In the past, Pierson's signs have spelled out typically forlorn, depressed, and romantic messages that complemented the dreamy vagaries of his photography. In these examples, Pierson continues in this vein while experimenting a bit with word games. The over-all effect is quite pretty, and sometimes rather pointedly witty as well. Through May 9. (American Fine Arts, 22 Wooster St. 941-0401.)

"Shadows of a Hand: The Drawings of Victor Hugo"—The French literary lion called his ink sketches "these things that amuse me between two verses"; at more than four thousand drawings, that's a lot of verse. Hugo's washy, atmospheric works prefigure abstract art from Rorschach to Rothko: a giant orange "Mushroom" from 1850 is borderline psychedelic, composed of gouache fingerprints, while "Ruined Aqueduct" from the same year is moodily precise, hinting at both Whistler and Hopper. A surprising, even inspiring, début/retrospective. Through June 13. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. 219-2166.)

Group Show—David Fratkin has evolved an impressive, original technique, laying down polyurethane and latex paint with molded stencils to create deep, dense textures that glisten like fired porcelain. The organic motifs range from boldly composed, batik-like spirals in warm earth tones to his brooding enigmatic field of baby blue which floats elegantly on a sheet of linoleum. Don Davis paints ghostly figures, some of them apparently bathers, that stream across the canvas like lost souls trapped in the picture plane. Rolf Haerem builds up heavy impasto in overlays of dark color, creating murky fields that teeter on the verge of figuration. Through May 16. (The Painting Center, 52 Greene St. 343-1060.)

Short List—**chantal akerman,** Sean Kelly, 43 Mercer St. 343-2405. Through June 13. . . . **mel bochner,** Markey, 55 Vandam St. 627-4446. Through June 6. . . . **reg butler,** Kent, 67 Prince St. 966-4500. Through June 20. . . . **lisa corinne davis,** June Kelly, 591 Broadway. 226-1660. Through June 2. . . . **jason dodge,** Kaplan, 48 Greene St. 226-6131. Through May 23. . . . **garth evans,** Studio School, 8 W. 8th St. 673-6466. Through May 16. . . . **vernon fisher,** Cowles, 420 West Broadway. 925-3500. Through June 13. . . . **robert irwin,** Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. 431-9224. Through June 19. . . . **brad kahlhamer,** Bronwyn Keenan, 3 Crosby St. 431-5083. Through June 6. . . . **wolfgang laib,** Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. 431-3685. Through June 6. . . . **george lappas,** Lehmann Maupin, 39 Greene St. 965-0753. Through May 23. . . . **zbigniew libera,** McIntyre, 45 Crosby St. 334-9666. Through May 12. . . . **paul mc carthy,** Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St. 219-9600. Through May 22. . . . **yong soon min,** Art in General, 79 Walker St. 219-0473. Through June 27. . . . **izhar patkin,** Holly Solomon, 172 Mercer St. 941-5777. Through June 13. . . . **paul henry ramirez,** Golden, 39 Wooster St. 274-0080. Through May 16. . . . **david scher,** Tilton, 49 Greene St. 941-1775. Through May 16. . . . **steven skollar,** Bridgewater/Lustberg, 560 Broadway. 941-6355. Through May 23. . . . **david smith,** Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. 228-2828. Through May 23. . . . **jaune quick-to-see smith,** Steinbaum Krauss, 132 Greene St. 431-4224. Through May 30. . . . **jessica stockholder,** Senior, 375 West Broadway. 941-0960. Through June 6. . . . **brian tolle,** Basilico Fine Arts, 26 Wooster St. 966-1831.

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John Singer Sargent. *Zuleika*, c.1906. Brooklyn Museum of Art Collection.

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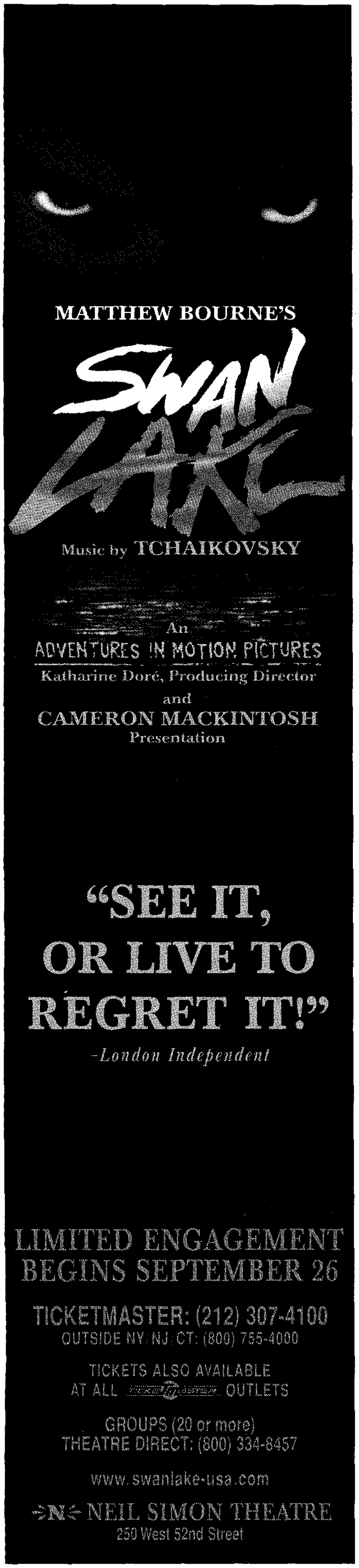

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AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

CHRISTIE'S—May 6: The concluding sessions of the spring auction of nineteenth-century (principally realist and Barbizon) and Impressionist and post-Impressionist paintings (by Renoir, Monet, le Sidaner, and others). . . . ¶ May 12-13: Twentieth-century art works, with the opening session including high-ticket paintings by Vlaminck, Braque, Modigliani, Picasso, and Rothko. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000.)

SOTHEBY'S—May 6: Tribal art works. . . . ¶ May 7: Nineteenth-century paintings, drawings, and sculpture, including some lovely little Corots, important pieces by Millet and Breton, and an imposing early-Impressionist interior scene painted by Alfred Stevens in 1880. . . . ¶ May 8-9: Fine wines, including several choice cases from the Domaine de la Romanée-Conti. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

PHILLIPS—An auction of Impressionist and modern works, including a Monet painting of San Giorgio Maggiore, a late Chagall, and an interesting group of German pieces. (406 E. 79th St. 570-4830. May 12.)

DOYLE—Couture and textiles by Dior and others, including the collection of Maria (Mrs. Nat King) Cole. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730. May 6.)

SWANN—A "modern literature" sale, featuring first editions, inscribed copies, and books from the private collections of John Steinbeck and Eugene O'Neill. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710. May 7.)

INTERNATIONAL FINE ART FAIR—This year's gathering of nearly seventy dealers is complemented by an exhibition of works celebrating the female form, lent by the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. May 8-13. For information, call 642-8572.)

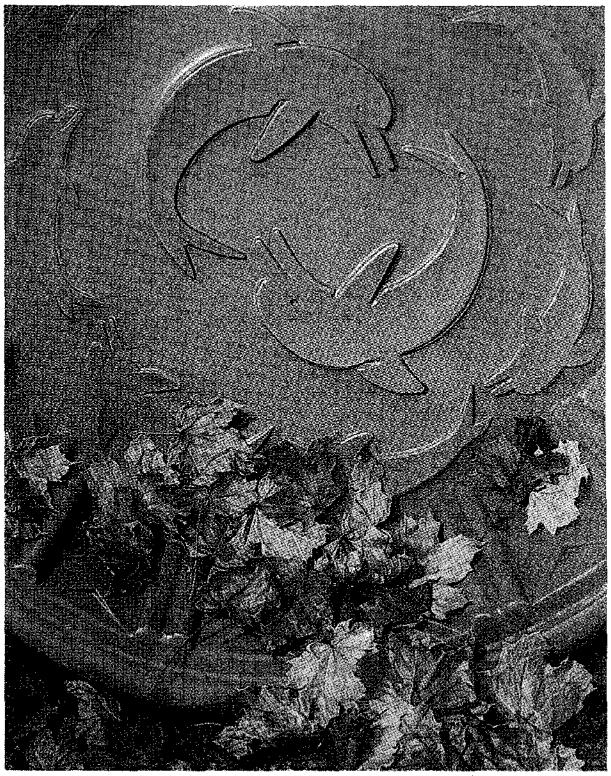
MORRELL'S—Fine and collectible wines. (Union League Club, Park Ave. at 37th St. May 9. For information, call 307-4200.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

SALLY GALL—New work by the evocative landscape photographer, made during a stay at an artist's colony in the Grenadines. The interiors—usually soft, netted beds that are either empty or occupied by lounging nude figures—are pleasantly dreamy but a little unnerving; there's more tension to be found out-of-doors. In "Safe Distance," a massive gray rainstorm plunges from a black sky to a black sea. As well as being one of the strongest images here, it's also, apparently, a fine homage to the work of Hiroshi Sugimoto. Through May 22. (Saul, 560 Broadway. 431-0747.)

MARION POST WOLCOTT (1910-90) / **SEBASTIÃO SALGADO**—"The FSA Years, 1939-41." Four overcoated picnickers, on a Florida beach in the off-season, sit gloomily on the running board of their big black Buick. It's a great picture, one of this unjustly neglected Farm Security Administration photographer's most iconic images, but it's upstaged by many of the three dozen other photographs here—of Tennessee cotton sharecroppers, Mississippi juke joints, and a West Virginia coal miner's daughter carrying a can of kerosene, her contorted body walking away up a long, hard road. / Five photographs taken among the landless peasants of rural Brazil by the well-known photojournalist. Both shows through May 23. (Richardson, 560 Broadway. 343-1255.)

"INVENTORS + ALCHEMISTS"—A group show of contemporary tintypes, photographs, collages, and other objects. Through June 14. (Morthland, 225 Tenth Ave., at 23rd St. 242-7767.) (Open Sundays, noon to 5.)



"Upright Pool," by Catherine Murphy (Lennon, Weinberg).

"MOTHERHOOD"—An offbeat illustration of the matriarchal mind-set, by such artists as Gertrude Käsebier, Clarence White, Marvin E. Newman, Gordon Coster, Grancel Fitz, and Esther Bubley. Through June 6. (De Lellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY MIDTOWN—"Robert Capa: Photographs," a retrospective of the war correspondent's career. Through June 7. (Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. 860-1777. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

GROUP SHOW—Early works by Peter Hujar, Joel Meyerowitz, and Milton Greene. Through May 9. (Danziger, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. 734-5300.)

SHORT LIST—**TINA BARNEY**, Borden, 560 Broadway. 431-0166. Through May 16. . . . **ED BURTYNSKY** and **LOIS CONNER**, Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. 226-1220. Both shows through May 30. . . . **BARBARA ESS**, Marcus, 578 Broadway. 226-3200. Through May 22. . . . **RENA BASS FORMAN**, Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St. 517-3766. Through May 30. . . . **EMMET GOWIN**, Pace Wildenstein MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. 759-7999. Through June 13. . . . **MICHAEL PRINCE**, Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292. Through June 13. . . . **EUGENE RICHARDS**, Kasher, 54 North Moore St. 966-3978. Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6; through May 30. . . . **CINDY SHERMAN**, Metro Pictures, 519 W. 24th St. 206-7100. Through May 16. . . . **GERALD SLOTA**, Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819. Through May 23. . . . **ANTONIO TUROK**, Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. 505-5555. Through June 21. . . . **DAN WEINER**, Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010. Through June 13.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Museum of the City of New York.)

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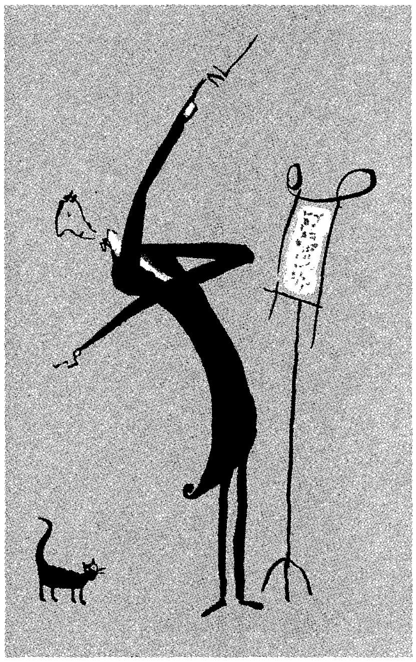
OPERA

Kirov Opera—The St. Petersburg-based company concludes its residency. Borodin's **PRINCE IGOR.** (May 6 and May 9 at 7:30.) . . . Tchaikovsky's **MAZEPPA.** (May 7 at 7:30.) . . . Glinka's **RUSLAN AND LYUDMILA.** (May 8 at 7:30.) . . . Prokofiev's **BETROTHAL IN A MONASTERY.** (May 9 at 12:30.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)



FRANÇOISE ROUSSET

Mannes Opera—A conservatory production of two one-act operas by Stefania de Kenessey. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. 496-8524. May 8 at 8 and May 10 at 7:30.)

"Esther"—The music of Handel's oratorio is joined to the verses of Racine's tragedy to yield a conceptual version by Millennial Arts Productions which includes drama and dance. (Angel Orensanz Foundation Center for the Arts, 172 Norfolk St., at E. Houston St., May 9 and May 12 at 8. Through May 16. For information about tickets, call 307-4100.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, Leonard Slatkin conducting. May 7 and May 9 at 8; May 8 at 11 A.M.; and May 12 at 7:30: Irving Fine's "Serious Song," Mozart's Piano Concerto in B-Flat Major (K. 595, with Alicia de Larrocha), and Dukas's Symphony in C Major. . . . ¶ May 9 at 2: A Young People's Concert, comprising music by Ravel, Fauré, and Chabrier.

Little Orchestra Society—Dino Anagnost leads a concert of works by Vivaldi which enjoyed favor in eighteenth-century France. (Alice Tully Hall. May 6 at 7:30.)

Oratorio Society of New York—The choir concludes its hundred-and-twenty-fifth-anniversary season with the United States première of Britten's "The World of the Spirit," in addition to favorite selections from the group's repertoire; with the Westchester Philharmonic. Lyndon Woodside directs. (Carnegie Hall. May 7 at 7:30.)

New York Pops—Singer Betty Buckley is featured in a program of Broadway music, with Skitch Henderson conducting. (Carnegie Hall. May 8 at 8.)

Riverside Choral Society—Patrick Gardner directs Duruflé's Requiem, Britten's "Cantata Misericordium," and Pärt's "Cantus in Memory of Benjamin Britten." (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. May 8 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

Met Orchestra—James Levine conducts Brahms's Piano Concerto No. 1 (with Evgeny Kissin), Tan Dun's "Death and Fire: Dialogue with Paul Klee," and Ravel's "Daphnis et Chloé" Suite No. 2. (Carnegie Hall. May 10 at 3.)

Jupiter Symphony—Jens Nygaard leads Michael Haydn's "Turkish" Suite, Busoni's Clarinet Concertino (with Ayako Oshima), Mozart's B-Flat-Major Piano Concerto (K. 450, with Seymour Lipkin), and Schubert's Symphony No. 5. (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. May 11 at 2 and 7 and May 12 at 8. For information about tickets, call 799-1259.)

Galatea Ensemble—The conductorless chamber orchestra offers Chandler Carter's Symphony for Winds, Bartók's Divertimento for String Orchestra, and Beethoven's Symphony No. 7. (St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 346 W. 20th St. May 11 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

New Amsterdam Singers—Clara Longstreth directs opera choruses by Purcell, Bizet, Gershwin, Paul Alan Levi, and others. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 12 at 8.)

RECITALS

Anne Sofie Von Otter—The Swedish mezzo-soprano, assisted by her long-standing pianist, Bengt Forsberg, offers works by Schubert, Peterson-Berger, Sibelius, Mahler (the "Lieder Eines Fahrenden Gesellen"), and Bizet. (Carnegie Hall. May 6 at 7:30.)

Krystian Zimerman—After catapulting to worldwide attention by winning the 1975 International Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw (which stresses the performance of its namesake's music), Zimerman resisted playing Chopin's music for more than a decade to avoid being stereotyped. It was probably a wise move; today he's acclaimed for his searching interpretations of a broad repertoire, which he doles out sparingly, in fewer than forty-five public appearances each year. In this recital, he feels safe in revisiting Chopin, performing his Third Ballade and Third Sonata, along with Beethoven's Sonatas in C Minor (Op. 13, the "Pathétique") and C Major (Op. 53, the "Waldstein"). (Avery Fisher Hall. May 6 at 8.)

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—May 6 at 8: An all-Mozart program, comprising the Bassoon Sonata in B-Flat Major, the "Kegelstatt" Trio, and the late, supernal Divertimento for String Trio in E-Flat Major (K. 563). (Weill Recital Hall.) . . . ¶ May 7 at 6:30: In the first of three free Thursday-evening performances at Temple Emanu-el, the ensemble offers Bach's "Brandenburg" Concertos No. 3, No. 5, and No. 6. (Fifth Ave. at 65th St. No tickets necessary.)

Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio—The ensemble's members perform Brahms's A-Major Violin Sonata, Chopin's Cello Sonata, and Mendelssohn's C-Minor Piano Trio. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. May 6 at 8.)

Festival Chamber Music Society—French hornist Robert Routch and pianist David Oei perform Alec Wilder's Horn Suite, and violinist Eriko Sato, cellist Ruth Sommers, and Mr. Oei offer piano trios by Mozart (in B-Flat Major, K. 502) and Dvořák (the "Dumky"). (Merkin Concert Hall. May 6 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Pianist Edward Auer performs Beethoven's F-Minor Sonata (Op. 57, the "Appassionata") and assists Ronald Thomas in performances of the composer's A-Major Cello Sonata and Variations on "Bei Männern," from Mozart's "Die Zauberflöte." (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061. May 7 at 7:30 and May 10 at 4.)

New York Philomusica—An all-Shostakovich concert, comprising his String Quartet No. 4, "Romance Suite" (Op. 27, with soprano Lucy Shelton), and Piano Quintet. (Merkin Concert Hall. May 7 at 8.)

American Festival of Microtonal Music—The seventeenth season of this intriguing exploration of music that employs nonstandard intervals. May 7 at 8: Works by Sasha Bogdanowitsch, Lou Harrison, Arvo Pärt, Violeta Dinescu, Virgil Moorefield, and festival organizer Johnny Reinhard (the première of his musical-theatre piece "Adam and Eve"). . . . ¶ May 8 at 8: Music by Don Conreaux, James Tenney, Harry Partch, Jon Catler, Howard Rovics, and Johann Sebastian Bach; the last name looks odd in this lineup, but when selections from the "Well-Tempered Clavier" are played in Werckmeister III temperament (as quite possibly they were played by Bach, and as they are here) they take on a flavor that modern ears may find exotic. (St. Paul's Chapel, Columbia University; enter at Broadway and 116th St. Tickets at the door.)

Maxim Vengerov—The violinist performs sonatas by Mozart (in E Minor), Beethoven (in A Major, the "Kreutzer"), and Brahms (in D Minor), with pianist Igor Uryash assisting. (Avery Fisher Hall. May 8 at 8.)

New Millennium Ensemble—The modern-music specialists perform new works by Betsy Schramm and Tamar Diesendruck, in addition to John Harbison's "The Natural World." (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. May 8 at 8.)

John Aler and Eliot Fisk—The tenor and the guitarist in a recital that includes songs by Morley, Britten, and Robert Beaser, as well as several nineteenth-century American composers (Foster, Henry Clay Work, and Alice Hewitt among them). (Weill Recital Hall. May 8 at 8.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Presenting a double bill of Stravinsky's "L'Histoire du Soldat" (in the composer's version for narrator and seven instruments) and "A Fiddler's Tale," a new work with an identical instrumentation which the Society and Jazz at Lincoln Center commissioned from Wynton Marsalis (with a libretto by Stanley Crouch). Mr. Marsalis is the trumpeter in both works, and actor André De Shields serves as narrator. (Alice Tully Hall. May 8 and May 12 at 8, and May 10 at 5.)

Benjamin Shapira—Performing Bach's six Suites for Unaccompanied Cello. (Weill Recital Hall. May 9 at 8:30.)

Olli Mustonen—The two volumes of Bach's "Well-Tempered Clavier" have served as the cornerstone of piano-playing ever since they were published, in the mid-eighteenth century. Shostakovich fell in love with them nearly two hundred years after they were written, and in 1950, having been smitten by the pianist Tatiana Nikolaeva's performances of them at a competition in Leipzig, he set out to emulate Bach through his own series of preludes and fugues in all the keys. In the first of three concerts exploring the relationship between Bach and Shostakovich, Mr. Mustonen scatters twelve of Shostakovich's preludes and fugues among twelve of Bach's, yielding a complete chromatic cycle with one foot in the eighteenth century and the other in the twentieth. (Alice Tully Hall. May 10 at 2.)

Duo Marchand—The ensemble, which consists of lutenist Andy Rutherford and soprano and harpist Marcia Young, performs works from the late Renaissance and early Baroque, by Dowland, Purcell, Holborne, and others. (St. Luke In-the-Fields, 487 Hudson St., at Grove St. May 10 at 2. Admission by contribution.)

Wolfgang Redux—Listeners who had their appetites whetted by the St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble's performance of Mozart's E-Flat-Major Divertimento for String Trio on Wednesday can catch the piece again (or twice again, for the truly devoted), in these two performances by violinist Katie Wolfe, violist Ori Kam, and cellist Iris Regev. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. May 10 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.)

Jessye Norman—The soprano performs songs by Strauss and Falla, as well as the première of Richard Danielpour's "Spirits in the Well" (a setting of four poems by Toni Morrison). Pianist Ken Noda assists. (Avery Fisher Hall. May 10 at 7.)

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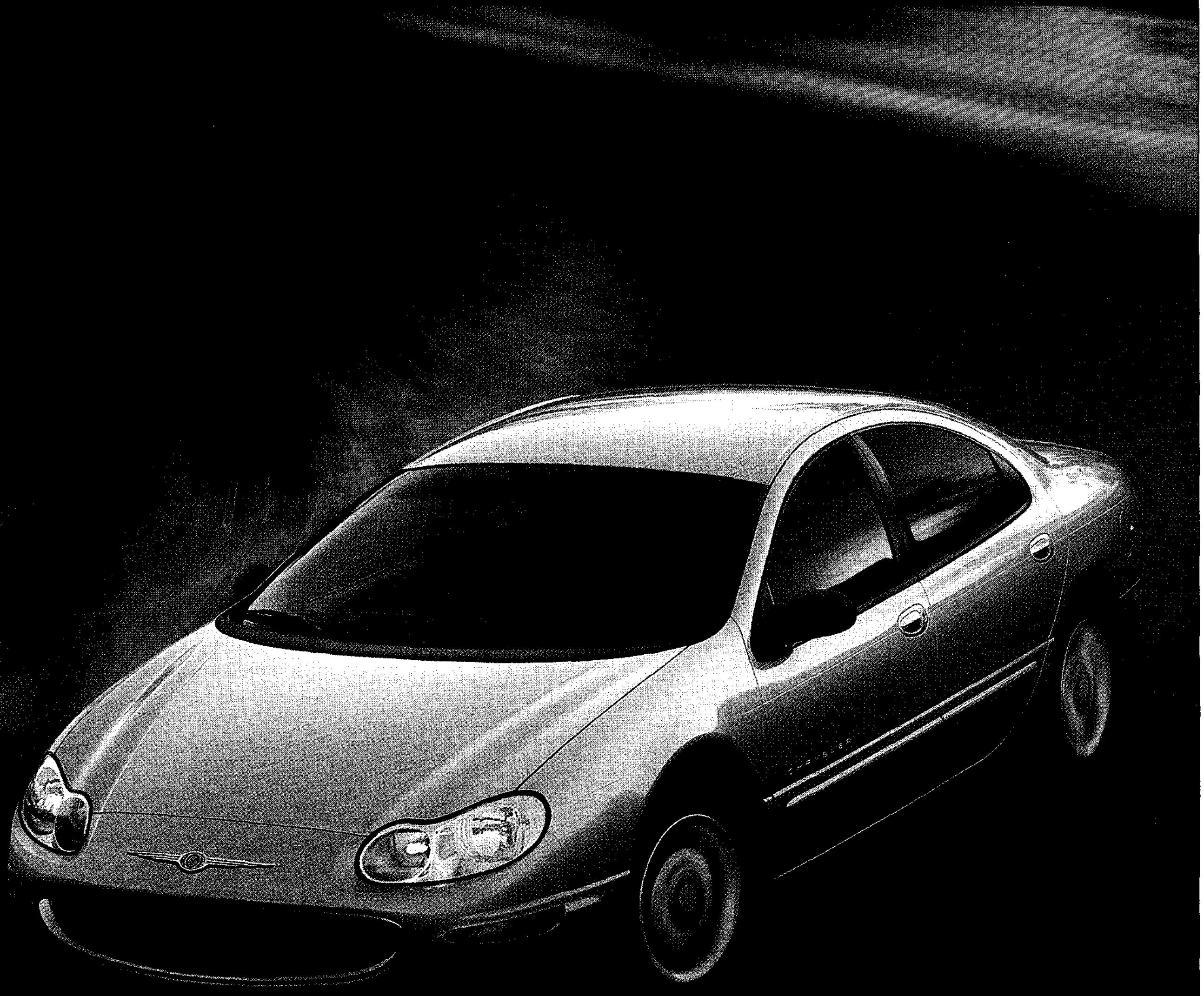

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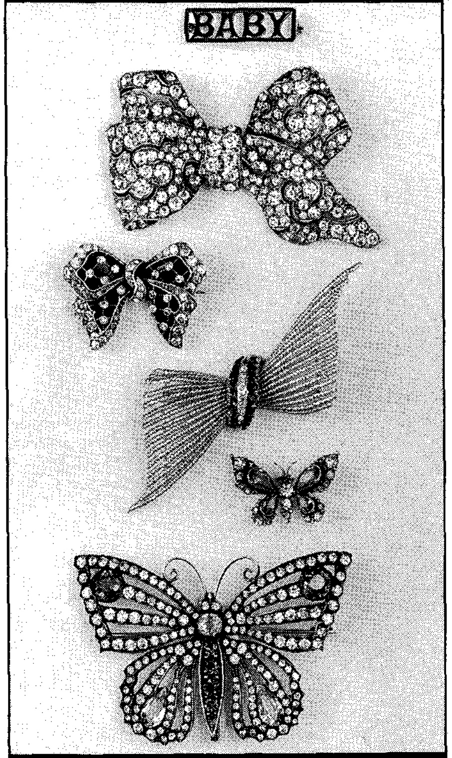

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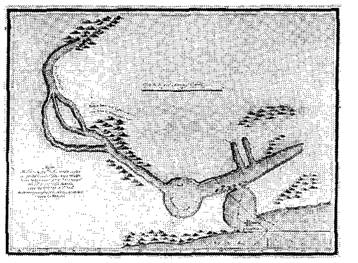

Manuscript map of the San Francisco Bay area based on Father Juan Crespi's overland expedition from Monterey to San Francisco, 1772.

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Windy Mozart—Three noted wind players from the New York Philharmonic join the members of the Elysium String Quartet to perform an all-Mozart program, comprising the Clarinet Quintet (with Stanley Drucker), the Horn Quintet (with L. William Kuyper), and the Oboe Quartet (with Joseph Robinson). (Weill Recital Hall. May 10 at 8:30.)

Chamber Music Company—The violinist Scott St. John and colleagues make three appearances at Merkin Concert Hall. May 11 at 6:45: Performing Hindemith's Clarinet Quartet and the première of Todd Levin's "Between My Mouth and Your Ear" (for voice, string quartet, and double-video installation). . . . ¶ At 9: A repeat of Mr. Levin's work, with comments from the composer and performers. . . . ¶ May 12 at 2: Messiaen's "Quartet for the End of Time," Paul Schoenfeld's "Café Music (Rags) for Piano Trio," and Dvořák's D-Major Piano Quartet.

Speculum Musicae—The modern-music ensemble offers Pawel Szymanski's "Limericks," Webern's quintet arrangement of Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony, Davidovsky's "Romancero," and horn trios by Yehudi Wyner and Michael Theodore. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 734-2130. May 11 at 8.)

David Korevaar—The pianist performs selections from Bach's "Well-Tempered Clavier" (Book Two), as well as works by Chopin. (Mansfield Hotel, 12 W. 44th St. No tickets necessary. May 11 at 8.)

New York Consort of Viols—In a program of German Baroque works by Buxtehude, Rosenmüller, Schein, and Bach; with members of the Rutgers College Concert Choir. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. May 12 at 8. For information about tickets, call 580-9787.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

The Naked City—While Mayor Giuliani resorts to restrictive zoning in his attempt to reduce the city's population of strippers, director and choreographer Jerry Mitchell swells the ranks of the ecdysiasts, at least for one night, with his production of "Broadway Bares VIII: Peep Show." Sandra Bernhard plays Mother Goose, while more than a hundred other theatrical stars sing and dance in Mitchell's loose adult interpretation of Perrault's fairy tales. "It's a big burlesque show," Mitchell says. "Everybody takes it off, but the art is in what you don't show. Gypsy Rose Lee, she had it down." A benefit performance. (May 10 at 9:30 and midnight. Webster Hall, 125 E. 11th St. 840-0770.)

Readings—May 6 at 6:30: By actors Stephen Lang and James Naughton, from the short stories of Steven Millhauser, Raymond Carver, and David McDonough. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.) . . . ¶ May 6 at 8: By Carol Brown Janeway, from her translation of Bernhard Schlink's novel "The Reader," and by Peter Constantine, from his translation of Thomas Mann's "Six Early Stories." (National Arts Club, 15 Gramercy Park S. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ May 7 at 7: By poet and translator Richard Howard, actresses Maria Tucci and Daisy Eagan, and other poets and writers, from the works of Victor Hugo. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—May 7 at 7: Publisher Jennifer Joseph, *New Yorker* poetry editor Alice Quinn, editor Michael Wiegers, and other literary professionals discuss the future of poetry publishing. (Poets House, 72 Spring St. Tickets at the door.) . . . ¶ May 11 at 6: *Paris Review* editor George Plimpton interviews novelist Norman Mailer. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ May 11 at 6:30: *New Yorker* editor Alice Truax talks with Arundhati Roy, who will also read from her novel, "The God of Small Things." (Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. 517-2742.)

Tour—May 9, from 1 to 5: The residents of five houses in the Brooklyn Heights Historic District open their doors for self-guided tours. For more information, call 718-858-9193.

BOOK CURRENTS

Sizzle

For most people, sexual writing falls somewhere between Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart's famous remark about pornography ("I know it when I see it") and the old adage about art ("I know what I like").

For Lisa Palac—the former editor of *Future Sex* magazine, which covered the commingling of sexuality, technology, and pop culture, and author of **The Edge of the Bed: How Dirty Pictures Changed My Life** (Little, Brown), a new memoir about her own sexual evolution—it's a genre in which distinctions are inevitably hazy. "I understand that sex should be peaceful and good and loving," she says, "but what about the things that turn me on and are repellent at the same time?"

Like most connoisseurs of erotica, Palac says that she's "always been attracted to sexual writing that's dark and full of paradox." One of the books she frequently returns to is Jack Morin's psychological study **The Erotic Mind** (HarperCollins), with its sexual equation of "attraction + obstacles = excitement." Among the works of fiction that meet her criteria is **Two Girls, Fat and Thin** (Scribner), by Mary Gaitskill, who, Palac says, is "adept at fingering that psychosexual button, able to go beyond the description of the sexual act and into the deep psychology and all the incredible nuance." And she loves **Susie Sexpert's Lesbian Sex World** (Cleis), by Susie Bright: "She's so funny and so incredibly informative and so shameless."

Georges Bataille's **Story of the Eye** (City Lights) holds a unique place in Palac's pantheon of erotic literature. Looking forward to "something classy" from a book written in nineteen-twenties France, Palac instead found "the most depraved story—I couldn't figure out if it was supposed to be erotic or a Monty Python skit." But Bataille did reveal to Palac the idea of a "limitless sexual imagination—that you can dream of all kinds of crazy stuff and sometimes you really don't know if it's supposed to be erotic or funny, or disgusting, or maybe all of those things at once."

WALTER MINUS

THE
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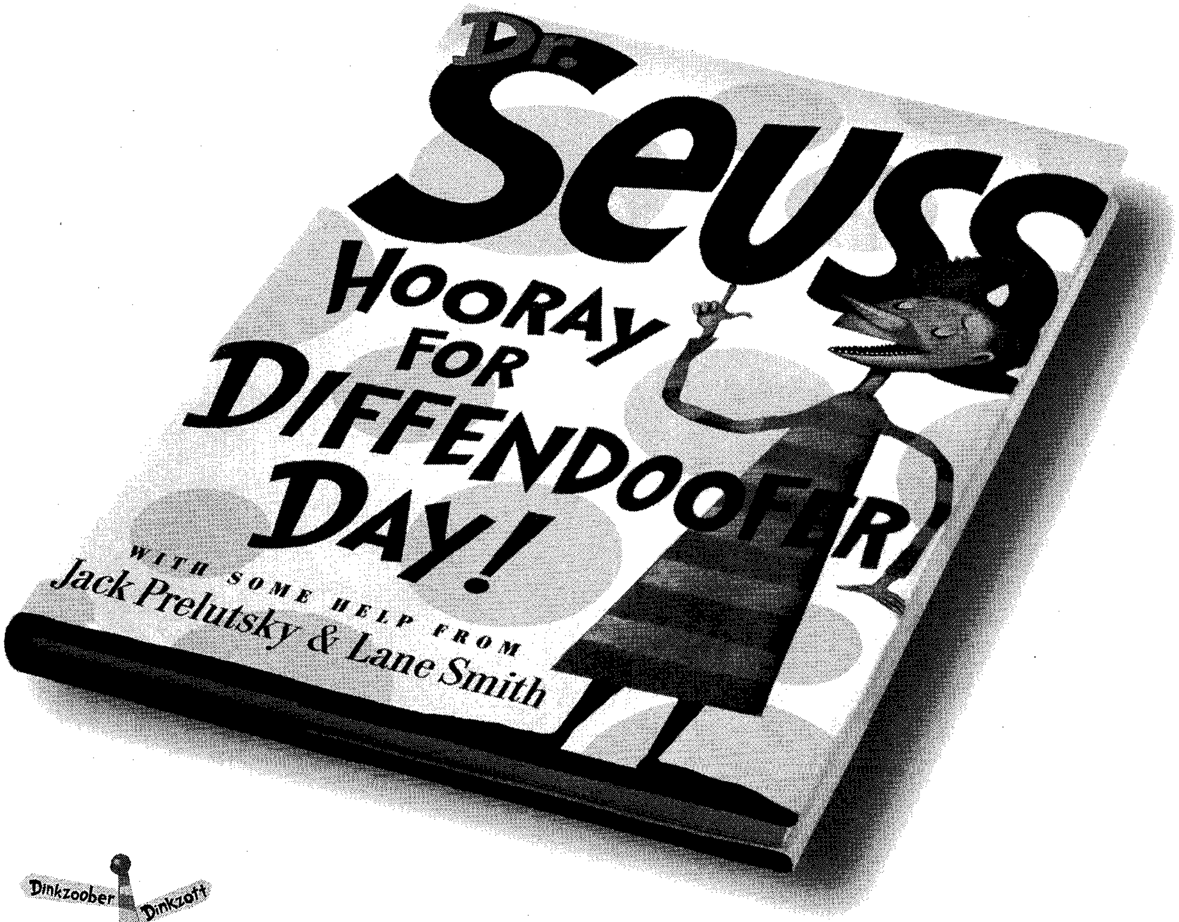

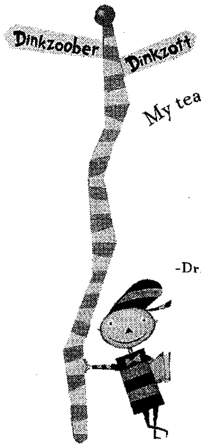

My teacher is Miss Bonkers, she's bouncy as a flea. I'm not certain what she teaches, but I'm glad she teaches me.

-Dr. Seuss, *Hooray for Diffendoofer Day!*

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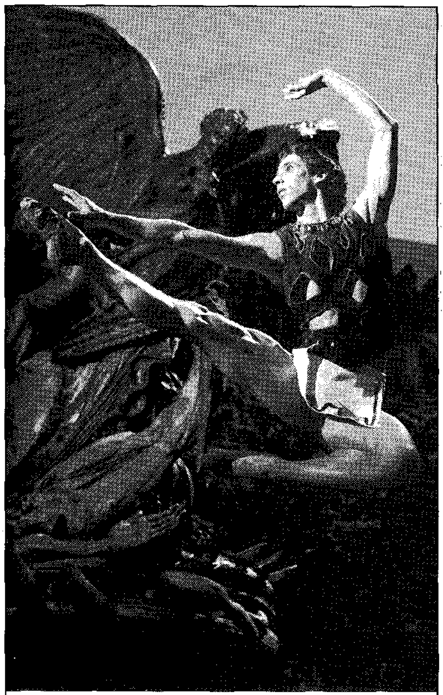

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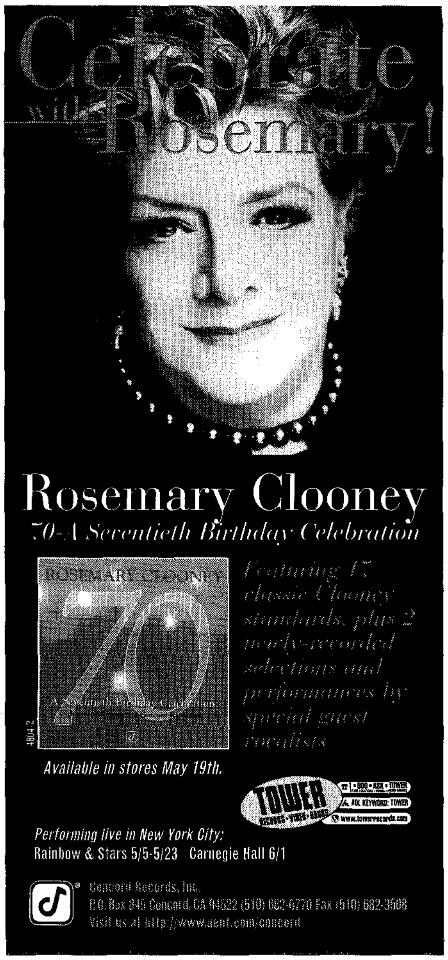

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THE MOVIES

OPENINGS

Artemisia—Valentina Cervi stars in this story of the seventeenth century's greatest woman artist, the Italian painter Artemisia Gentileschi. Written and directed by Agnès Merlet. In French. Opening May 8. (Angelika Film Center and Cinema II.)

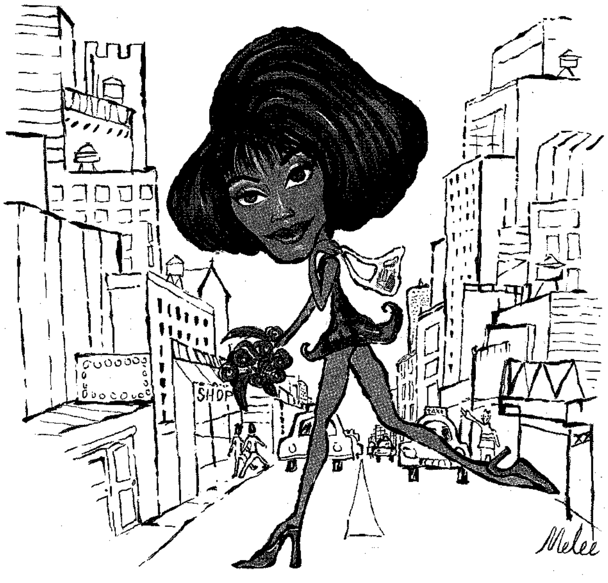
Clockwatchers—Director Jill Sprecher's début film concerns office politics and four temps (Toni Collette, Parker Posey, Lisa Kudrow, and Alanna Ubach). Opening May 8. (Angelika Film Center.)

Deep Impact—Mimi Leder directed this action thriller about the possible collision of a comet with the Earth. With Robert Duvall, Téa Leoni, Elijah Wood, Vanessa Redgrave, Maximilian Schell, and Morgan Freeman. Opening May 8.

The Kingdom, Part 2—Director Lars von Trier's continuing tale of the people who work in Kingdom Hospital, Copenhagen. The five-hour-long film will be shown in two two-and-a-half-hour sections. In Danish. Opening May 6. (Film Forum.)

Shopping for Fangs—A psychological thriller about four young adults whose lives cross in highly unexpected ways. Directed by Quentin Lee and Justin Lin. Opening May 8. (Village East Cinemas.)

Woo—Jada Pinkett Smith and Tommy Davidson star in a romantic comedy about a mismatched couple on a blind date. Directed by Daisy Von Scherler Mayer. Opening May 8. (84th Street Sixplex, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, State, Sutton, and Village Theatre VII.)



Opening May 8, Jada Pinkett Smith in "Woo."

ROBERT MELEE

FILM NOTES

(If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

The Apartment (1960)—Billy Wilder took home three Academy Awards for producing, directing, and co-writing (with I. A. L. Diamond) this tale of a little guy (Jack Lemmon) floundering morally in a big New York insurance firm, and it still has a huge reputation—Cameron Crowe cited it as an inspiration for "Jerry Maguire." But this undeniably skillful blend of satire and schmaltz hasn't worn well. Wilder said he got the idea of Lemmon's lending out his apartment to philandering executives when he thought of Trevor Howard borrowing a flat in "Brief Encounter," but what was suggestive in provincial England grates when transferred to a Gotham Neverland where a Jewish doctor (Jack Kruschen) dispenses advice on how to be a mensch. Still, Lemmon, at that point in his career, was an inspired farceur—watch him straining spaghetti through a tennis racquet—and he shares a pixillated chemistry with Shirley MacLaine as a love-ravaged elevator girl. With Fred MacMurray and Ray Walston.—*Michael Sragow* (Film Forum 2; May 8-9.)

The Big Lebowski—After the mysteriously affecting "Fargo," the Coen brothers have reverted to their pose of cynical disengagement with a movie that—insofar as it's about anything—is about the interface of bowling and Orthodox Judaism. Set in Los Angeles, this irritatingly antic caper stars Jeff Bridges as the Dude, a carefree seventies-style dropout who hangs out at the local bowling alley with his buddies Walter (John Goodman), a chronically irate Nam vet, and Donny (Steve Buscemi), the trio's sweet but dim verbal foil. The clever dialogue and beautiful production design (the lavish dream sequences look like Busby Berkeley on ecstasy) almost make you forget the vacancy at the movie's core, but in the end there's no escaping the feeling that the Coens are speaking a secret language. With Julianne Moore and John Turturro.—*Daphne Merkin* (3/23/98) (Metro Cinema and Village Theatre VII.)

The Butcher Boy—Neil Jordan's daring new film, adapted from the novel by Patrick McCabe and co-written by the two of them, moves with a nervous energy that suggests the vivid workings of the well-populated imagination of twelve-year-old Francie Brady (Eamonn Owens). The film is set in a bleak, gossip-ridden Northern Irish town in the early sixties. Francie's parents are at each other's throats: his father (Stephen Rea) is a drunkard and his mother (Aisling O'Sullivan) is a fragile creature who takes "tablets" in order to cope. Francie's growing sense of humiliation and outrage is focussed on Mrs. Nugent (Fiona Shaw), the town snob, who personifies all the unfairness and cruelty of Francie's life. Owens, with his thatch of red hair and shining eyes, makes Francie's boyish zest as real as his pain, and Shaw plays his nemesis with great subtlety—as a woman lost in her own disdain. This extraordinary film is a reminder that childhood is not the cutesy-pie concoction American filmmakers would have it be.—*D.M.* (4/6/98) (Angelika Film Center, Beekman, and Lincoln Square.)

Character—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (62nd & Broadway.)

Chinese Box—Wayne Wang's elegant, sorrowful valentine to his native city of Hong Kong stars Jeremy Irons as John, a British expatriate journalist, and Gong Li as Vivian, the gravely beautiful, elusive woman he loves. The movie opens on New Year's Eve, 1996, six months before the Crown Colony is to revert to Chinese control: wealthy residents gather in banquet halls to toast the making of future deals, while in the poorer parts of the city women with worn-out faces operate produce stands. After John is diagnosed with a fatal illness, he quits his job and, with a photojournalist friend (Ruben Blades), wanders the underside of Hong Kong—the brothels, the betting parlors, and the markets where animals are slaughtered—with his video camera in search of authentic images. The film is extraordinary to look at for its ingenious mixture of visual styles, and it will speak to anyone who has ever tried to take possession of a place or a person in the hope of taking possession of himself. In English and Cantonese.—*D.M.* (4/20/98) (Angelika Film Center, Eastside Playhouse, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

City of Angels—In this slick adaptation of Wim Wenders' "Wings of Desire," Meg Ryan, America's favorite child/woman, plays Dr. Maggie Rice, a heart surgeon who opens her baby blues wide and cries a lot, and Nicolas Cage is Seth, an angel with an unblinking stare who falls in love with her. Angels, according to this movie's nonexistent logic, travel at the speed of thought and are invisible except to other angels, children, and the dying. But Seth makes himself visible to Maggie, lends her his favorite novel ("A Moveable Feast"), and engages her in deep metaphysical conversation. ("How do you explain," he asks her, "the enduring myth of heaven?") Seth eventually makes the radical decision to become human, and Maggie cleans his wounds in front of a fireplace in her uncle's glamorous little cottage on Lake Tahoe. But, sure enough, tragedy beckons, enabling Seth to say, "I would rather have had one breath of her hair, one kiss of her mouth, one touch of her hand—than an eternity without it." We believe him, 'cause he's that kind of transported guy and Meg Ryan, with her tousled yellow hair, curvy smile, and prepubescent bod, is that kind of girl.—*D.M.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

Fireworks—The seventh and most sombre work from the cultish Japanese director Takeshi Kitano. In the new film, which he also wrote and co-edited, Kitano plays Nishi, a policeman on the slide. Some colleagues were shot on duty, and, rightly or wrongly, Nishi takes the blame. Meanwhile, his wife is dying, so he takes her away for a country vacation, which he finances by robbing a bank; despite all the cops and gangsters on their trail, the two of them enjoy a last, almost wordless idyll. No one but Kitano would have thought to combine cold spasms of violence with such a tender portrait of marriage. In Japanese.—*Anthony Lane* (3/30/98) (Film Forum.)

A Friend of the Deceased—Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

Good Will Hunting—Matt Damon plays a belligerent working-class genius from South Boston who's been abused in foster homes and is now being given a chance to triumph over his past; Robin Williams is the maverick shrink who helps him understand his demons; and Minnie Driver is the unsnobbish Harvard girlfriend who tries to heal him with acceptance. If it sounds treacly, it's not, thanks to a honed script (co-written by Damon and Ben Affleck, who plays Damon's best pal), subtle performances, and surprisingly warm direction by Gus Van Sant.—*D.M.* (1/19/98) (New York Twin and Waverly.)

Mr. Klein (1977)—The title may sound like a Jewish detergent, but nothing gets washed away in this unsatisfying French quasi-thriller, set in Paris in 1942, during the Occupation. It's about a fashionable art dealer (Alain Delon), an Aryan, who buys up treasures from fleeing Jews and then, through what may or may not be a bureaucratic mistake, becomes confused with another Mr. Klein, a non-Aryan. Written by

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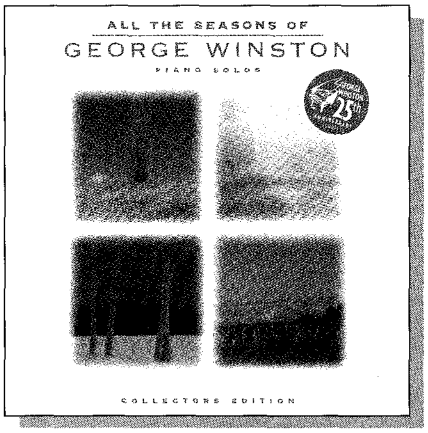

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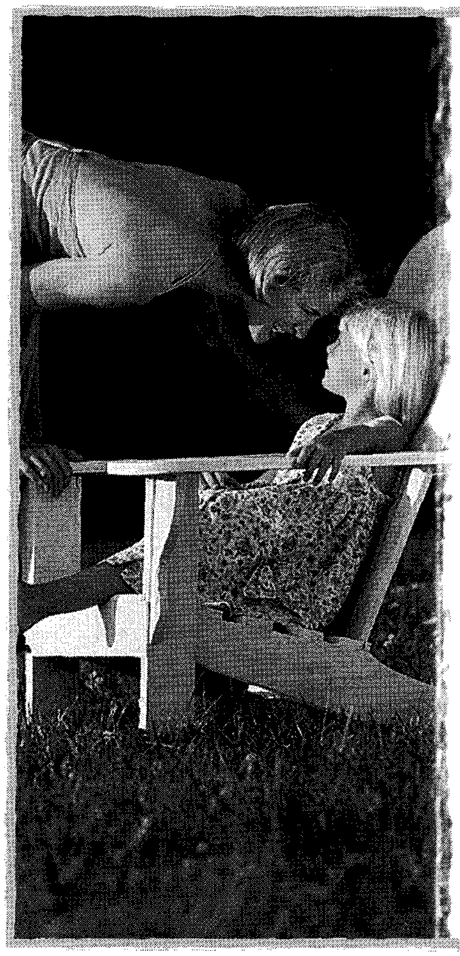

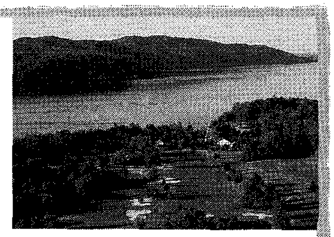

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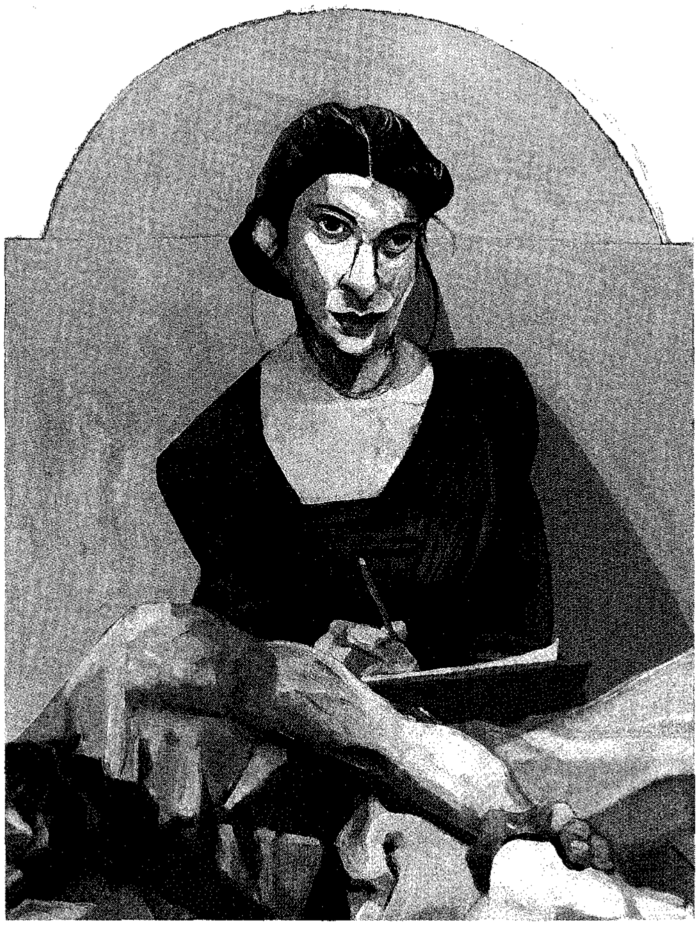
Franco Solinas, this is the kind of parable-thriller that has to be tight to be effective, but the director, Joseph Losey, keeps it going for more than two hours. It's a classic example of his weighty emptiness; the atmosphere is heavily pregnant, with no delivery. As Klein, Delon gives a serious, deliberately charmless performance. With Jeanne Moreau, Michel Lonsdale, and Juliet Berto. Cinematography by Gerry Fisher. In French.—*Pauline Kael* (Museum of Modern Art; May 7-8.)

A Price Above Rubies—Renée Zellweger looks alternately bewildered and pouty in her role as the wife of an ultra-Orthodox scholar (Glenn Fitzgerald) who treats marital sex as an indecent diversion from his spiritual duties. The claustrophobic feel of the couple's Borough Park community is effectively rendered, but the movie's emotional tone wobbles confusingly between magic realism and poorly nuanced character study. Still, there's the kernel of something interesting in this I. B. Singer-like tale of a young woman born into the wrong culture who eventually finds a way to make a new life for herself—replete with a Hispanic lover and unkosher egg rolls. With "ER" 's Julianna Margulies, who is utterly convincing as a proper Hasidic wife and mother. Written and directed by Boaz Yakin.—*D.M.* (New York Twin.)

Primary Colors—Mike Nichols and Elaine May's adaptation of Joe Klein's best-seller purrs along rather winningly and even manages, in the long run, to weave a sad, thoughtful tale. John Travolta peddles his Clinton imitation softly, and Emma Thompson is convincing as his cool, politically driven wife. Although there's no political depth to May's writing, Nichols has spun a big, brash Hollywood confection that will send audiences home with still more Clintonia to talk about.—*Bruce Diones* (Coronet Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Orpheum VII, and Ziegfeld.)

Shooting Fish—An amiable but uneven comedy about two attractive swindlers (Stuart Townsend and Dan Futterman) and the mischievous beauty (Kate Beckinsale) who cons them. The film is paced like a breezy sixties romp and there are some good gags, but the plot's a bit creaky and lacks the clever zing of a good scam. The luminous wonder of the film is Beckinsale ("Cold Comfort Farm"); her performance is a true lark.—*B.D.* (Coronet Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas.)

Sliding Doors—Gwyneth Paltrow dons an accent and a dose of English reserve to play Helen, an unfulfilled Londoner who works in public relations. One day as she's running to catch the train she bumps her head and splits into two parallel lives. In the first version she goes home to her caddish boyfriend and continues with her depressing life; in the second version she finds him cheating on her, leaves, starts her own business, gets a smashing new hairdo, and takes up with the nice guy she deserves (John Hannah, a charming Scot with thick brows). Paltrow is as radiant as ever, but she keeps picking parts that focus on technical skills like accents—she has yet to perform the real star's trick of being herself, and inviting the audience to identify. Peter Howitt wrote and directed the likable, shallow script.—*Sarah Kerr* (Chelsea Cinemas, Gotham Cinema, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas.)



Opening May 8, Valentina Cervi in "Artemisia."

RICCARDO VECCHIO

The Spanish Prisoner—A young inventor (Campbell Scott) dreams up something called "the Process" that is destined to bring untold wealth to his bosses but not to himself. When he airs this grievance to a businessman whom he meets in the Caribbean (Steve Martin), he finds himself enmeshed in a plot from which there is no escape, unless you count the suspiciously loving attentions of a fellow-employee (Rebecca Pidgeon). If you're prepared to ignore the plot's absurdities, David Mamet's film is addictive, and Carter Burwell's score works on you like a massage. The film also offers the sharpest and most quizzical work that Steve Martin has turned in for some time.—*A.L.* (4/13/98) (Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Titanic—At well over three hours, James Cameron's grand new picture has plenty of romance to get through before it breaks the vessel in half. Leonardo DiCaprio plays the freewheeling Jack, who wins a steerage ticket and finds himself falling for the wealthy Rose (Kate Winslet), to the disapproval of her mother (Frances Fisher) and her brute of a fiancé (Billy Zane). The social animus of the story, like its imaginative majesty, is Dickensian; this all feels like two hundred million dollars well spent.—*A.L.* (12/15/97) (Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, State, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

Tomorrow Never Dies—A game attempt by director Roger Spottiswoode to wring a little more life out of the James Bond series. The most enviable of 007's new toys is a remote-controlled B.M.W. that you drive with a small keypad; Pierce Brosnan, who plays Bond (for the second time), appears to be operated by the same mechanism. Also present are Jonathan Pryce (as a media tyrant), Teri Hatcher (as his doomed wife), and, most entertaining of all, Michelle Yeoh, who does stuff with her heels and elbows that 007 wouldn't dream of trying without a silencer.—*A.L.* (First & 62nd Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, and Waverly.)

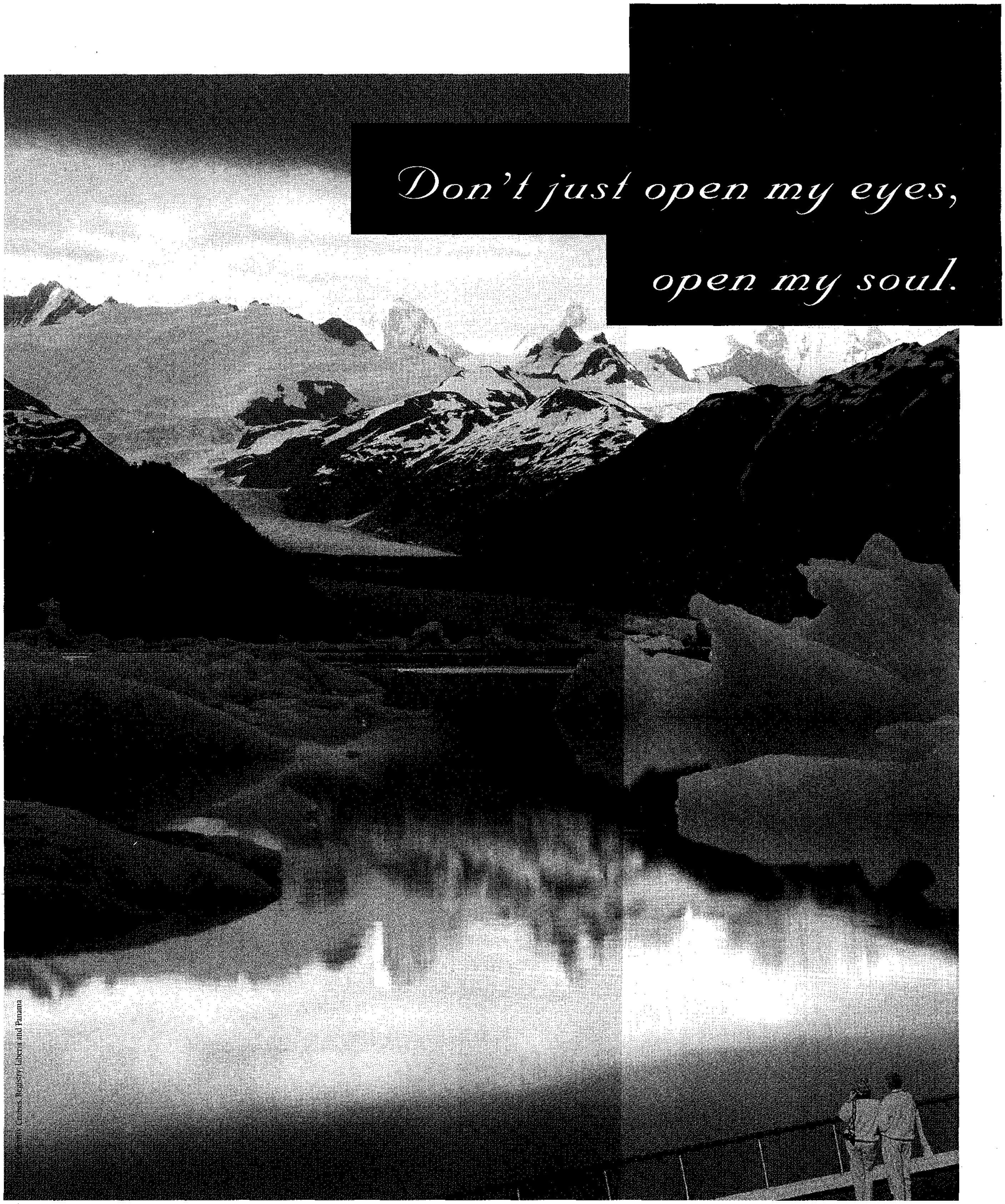
Two Girls and a Guy—Written and directed by James Toback, who, since the 1978 "Fingers," has busied himself with tales of obsessive behavior. This latest effort is set almost entirely in a New York apartment, owned by an actor named Blake (Robert Downey, Jr.), who comes home to discover that the two women he has been dating—Carla (Heather Graham) and Lou (Natasha Gregson Wagner)—have broken into his place. The movie is an exercise in vigorous self-exculpation, and Blake almost gets away with it. The trouble is simply that you don't believe the setup—why would the girls hang around while the guy tries to win them back? What rescues the whole enterprise is the presence of Downey, whose mood dances between the frivolous and the hunted; it's not his best role, but it answers to all that is seductive and untrustworthy in his eyes. The opening music, by the way, is Brahms—the climax of his Horn Trio, which is the best joke in the movie.—*A.L.* (4/27/98 & 5/4/98) (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema I, and Lincoln Square.)

Weekend (1967)—As long as the writer-director Jean-Luc Godard stays with cars as the symbol of bourgeois materialism, the barbarity of his bourgeois—their greed and the self-love they project onto their possessions—is exact and funny. The picture goes much further—sometimes majestically, sometimes with surreal details that suggest an affinity between Godard and Buñuel, sometimes with methods and ideas that miss, badly. There are extraordinary passages, such as a bourgeois wife's erotic confession and a long virtuoso sequence of tracking shots of cars stalled on the highway, with the motorists pressing down with all their might on their car horns, which sound triumphant, like trumpets in Purcell. Though deeply flawed, this film has more depth than any of Godard's earlier work. It's his vision of Hell, and it ranks with the greatest. In French.—*P.K.* (Museum of Modern Art; May 10-11.)

You're a Big Boy Now (1966)—Francis Ford Coppola's fondness for naïve heroes reached an early nadir in this coming-of-age comedy. Peter Kastner plays a nineteen-year-old clerk at the New York Public Library who roams the stacks on roller skates when he's not mooning over a manipulative would-be stage star (Elizabeth Hartman). His mixture of clumsiness and sweetness is all too much; in a typical move, he sneezes on her, then wipes her face with his hankie. But when the camera is catching city life off the cuff (to the music of the Lovin' Spoonful), the movie has energy and charm.—*M.S.* (Film Forum 2; May 6-7.)

ALSO PLAYING

THE APOSTLE (reviewed in our issue of 2/2/98): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **AS GOOD AS IT GETS** (1/5/98): 64th and 2nd. . . . **THE BIG HIT:** Astor Plaza, 84th Street Sixplex, Metro Cinema, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII. . . . **THE BIG ONE:** Village East Cinemas. . . . **BLACK DOG:** Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Park & 86th Street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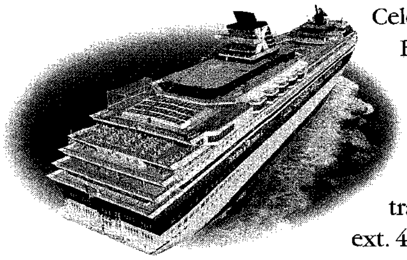

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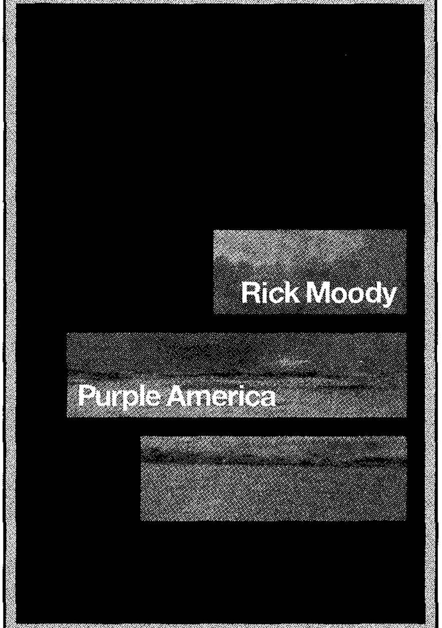

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ANGELIKA FILM CENTER, 18 W. Houston St.
ART GREENWICH TWIN, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
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BEEKMAN, Second Ave. at 66th St.
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CINEMA VILLAGE, 22 E. 12th St.
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CRITERION CENTER, Broadway at 44th St.
EAST 85TH STREET, First Ave. at 85th St.
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86TH STREET EAST TWIN, Third Ave. at 86th St.
EMBASSY 1, 2, AND 3, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59TH STREET EAST CINEMA, 239 E. 59th St.
FILM FORUM, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
FIRST & 62ND CINEMAS, 400 E. 62nd St.
GOTHAM CINEMA, Third Ave. at 58th St.
GUILD, 33 W. 50th St.
LINCOLN PLAZA CINEMAS, Broadway at 63rd St.
LINCOLN SQUARE, Broadway at 68th St.
METRO CINEMA 1 AND 2, Broadway at 99th St.
MURRAY HILL CINEMAS, 160 E. 34th St.
NEW YORK TWIN, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19TH STREET EAST 6, Broadway at 19th St.
OLYMPIA I AND II, Broadway at 107th St.
ORPHEUM VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
PARIS, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
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QUAD CINEMA, 34 W. 13th St.
REGENCY, Broadway at 67th St.
THE SCREENING ROOM, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
62ND & BROADWAY, 62 W. 62nd St.
64TH AND 2ND, Second Ave. at 64th St.
72ND STREET EAST, Third Ave. at 71st St.
STATE, Broadway at 45th St.
SUTTON 1 AND 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34TH STREET SHOWPLACE, 238 E. 34th St.
VILLAGE EAST CINEMAS, Second Ave. at 12th St.
VILLAGE THEATRE VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
WAVERLY 1 AND 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
WORLDWIDE CINEMAS, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
ZIEGFELD, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

FILM FORUM 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—May 6-7: "You're a Big Boy Now" (†) and "Little Murders" (1971, Alan Arkin).... May 8-9: "The Apartment" (†) and "The Seven Year Itch" (1955, Billy Wilder).... May 10-11: "Designing Woman" (1957, Vincente Minnelli) and "Desk Set" (1957, Walter Lang).... May 12-13: "The Tender Trap" (1955, Charles Walters) and "Come Blow Your Horn" (1963, Bud Yorkin).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A program of films starring Alain Delon; most in French, with English subtitles. May 7 at 2:30 and May 8 at 6: "Three Men to Destroy" (1980, Jacques Deray).... May 7 at 6 and May 8 at 2:30: "Mr. Klein" (†).... May 9 at 2 and May 12 at 6: "The Swimming Pool" (1969, Deray).... May 9 at 5 and May 11 at 6: "The Samurai" (1967, Jean-Pierre Melville).... ¶ May 7 at 6: Short films by Pelle Powe, one program in a series about the history of 8-mm. films and videos in the United States.... ¶ May 7 at 6:30: "Facemania" (1997, Thomas Ciulei).... ¶ May 8 at 3: "Gratian" (1995, Ciulei).... ¶ A program of films from Finland; in Finnish, with English subtitles. May 8 at 6: "The Collector" (1996, Auli Mantila).... May 8 at 8 and May 9 at 3: "A Worker's Diary" (1967, Risto Jarva).... May 9 at 1: "Rally" (1970, Jarva).... May 9 at 5: "One Man's War" (1973, Jarva).... May 10 at 1: "The Village Shoemakers" (1923, Erkki Karu; a silent film, with French intertitles).... May 10 at 3: "Take Care of Your Scarf, Tatjana" (1994, Aki Kaurismäki).... ¶ May 8 at 8:15: "The Thief of Bagdad" (1924, Raoul Walsh; silent).... ¶ A series of films made between 1966 and 1969. May 10 at 2: "Easy Rider" (1969, Dennis Hopper).... May 10 at 5 and May 11 at 2:30: "Weekend" (†).... May 12 at 2:30: "Bonnie and Clyde" (1967, Arthur Penn).

WALTER READE THEATRE, Lincoln Center (875-5600)—A program of films from Argentina; in Spanish, with English subtitles. May 6 at 2, 6, and 9:45 and May 7 at 2: "Hand in the Trap" (1961, Leopoldo Torre Nilsson).... May 6 at 3:50 and 7:45 and May 7 at 3:50 and 9: "The Party Is Over" (1960, Nilsson).... May 8 at 2 and 6:15 and May 10 at 4: "The Sleep of Heroes" (1998, Sergio Renan).... May 8 at 4 and 8:15 and May 10 at 8: "Eva Perón" (1996, Juan Desanzo).... May 9 at 4 and 8:30 and May 10 at 6: "The Impostor" (1996, Alejandro Maci).... May 9 at 6: "Ashes of Paradise" (1997, Marcelo Piñeyro).... May 11 at 2, 6, and 9:45 and May 12 at 4: "Beyond Oblivion" (1956, Hugo del Carril).... May 11 at 4 and 7:50 and May 12 at 2: "Rosaura at 10 O'Clock" (1958, Mario Soffici).... ¶ May 7 at 6:30: "Totally Confused" (1997, Gary Rosen and Greg Pritikin).... ¶ Weekend showings for children. May 9-10 at 2: "Julio and His Angel" (1996, Jorge Cervera, Jr.).

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—A program of independent films made in New York City. May 9 at 2: "God Told Me To" (1976, Larry Cohen).... May 9 at 4:30: "Who's That Knocking at My Door?" (1967, Martin Scorsese).... May 10 at 2 and 5: "Killer's Kiss" (1955, Stanley Kubrick).... May 10 at 3:30: "Shadows" (1960, John Cassavetes).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—May 12 at 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, and 9: "Three Lives and Only One Death" (1996, Raoul Ruiz; in French).

SYMPHONY SPACE, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400)—A series of films that have won or been nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Film. May 12 at 7: "Z" (1969, Costa-Gavras; in French).... May 12 at 9:15: "The Battle of Algiers" (1967, Gillo Pontecorvo; in French and Arabic).

A DIFFERENT LIGHT BOOKSTORE, 151 W. 19th St.—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). May 10 at 7, the feature will be "Some Kind of Wonderful" (1987, Howard Deutch).

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THE
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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

DEPT. OF INQUISITION

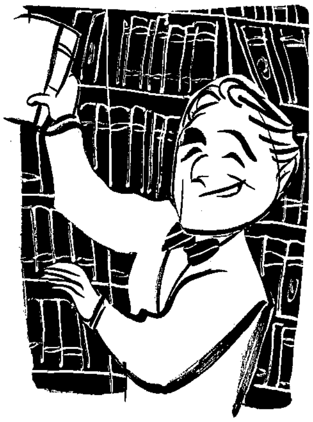
The one special prosecutor who walked away from absolute power.

IN Washington these days, it's not unusual to hear criticism of the independent-counsel statute, the law that provides for special prosecutors like the Whitewater counsel, Kenneth Starr. What was once seen as special pleading from high-ranking Republicans who were pursued under the statute during the Reagan years has developed into a roiling bipartisan gripe session calling for the statute's amendment, and even repeal, now that Democrats are also feeling the heat.

But it is a bit unexpected to find among these critics Jacob Stein, a singularly apolitical Washington lawyer (he says that he has never voted in his life) who is himself a former independent counsel, one of the very few who have escaped from the high-pressure assignment not just unscathed but actually celebrated. As the special prosecutor appointed to review charges of financial improprieties against Attorney General-designate Edwin Meese III, in 1984, Stein showed that an independent-counsel investigation does not necessarily have to turn into an expensive morass. That makes his strong feelings against the statute even more remarkable.

At seventy-three, Stein is the kind of lawyer who is always referred to as "a dean" of the local bar, which, indeed, he once headed. In an era of high-tech computer research and colorless Ivy League practitioners, he seems happily stuck in a Louis Auchincloss novel—a literate, silver-haired gentleman given to pin-striped suits with pocket squares, white shoes in the summer months, and white flannel trousers for paddle tennis. He writes regularly for *The American Scholar* on personal passions such as vaudeville and juggling. But Stein is best known as an acute judge of people, and it is from this perch, he says, that he has concluded that the independent-counsel statute is fatally flawed.

The statute, he told me, "is based on a mistaken notion of human nature." Unlike other prosecutors, and other officers of the government, independent counsels are given unlimited budgets, unlimited time, and unlimited scope. "I was astonished at the authority I had," Stein confessed. "I felt it was a personal test of my sanity." While few people with a lot of power complain about it, Stein actually admits, "I had more authority than anybody should have. It's an extraordinary experience, it really is. You have the power to destroy people."



Jacob Stein

In the eyes of outside experts, Stein's decision not to indict Meese, after only five months of investigation, and after spending only three hundred and twelve thousand dollars, was a model outcome. Archibald Cox, the Watergate special prosecutor, whose firing inspired the law, has said that Stein's investigation was "the only case that I would say was an example of the way it should go."

If so, Stein says, it may be because he kept two bits of wisdom in mind. One was John Adams's observation that "guilt and crimes are so frequent in the world, that all of them cannot be punished; and many times they happen in such a manner that it is not of much consequence to the public whether they are punished or not." The other was a line from Italo Calvino about the kind of madness that can overwhelm investigators, so that "the least thing is seen as the center of a network of relationships" which could "end by embracing the entire universe."

Stein knows that critics of the independent-counsel statute believe that only such madness can explain the huge sums that have been spent investigating seemingly minor executive-branch wrongdoing; Starr, for example, has spent thirty-five million dollars over four years, looking into a twenty-year-old failed real-estate investment by the Clintons. For their burgeoning inquisitions, Starr and many others have been vilified, and accused of political bias and personal agendas. But, instead of criticism, Stein has only sympathy for his fellow-counsels. For him, the issue isn't personal; it's human. —JANE MAYER

RAG TRADE

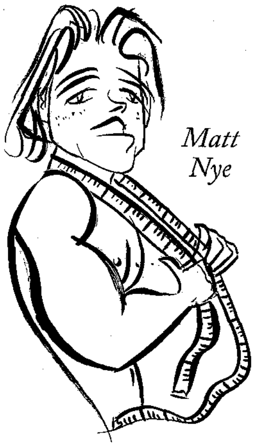
A young designer sets out to prove that he's not just a pretty face.

MATT NYE, the former Calvin Klein accessories designer, who is best known as the man for whom Jann Wenner, the publisher of *Rolling Stone,* left his wife, would like to set the record straight on one thing. "I never modelled—never," he said the other day. "That has been a continual ref-

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

erence, that I was a Calvin Klein *model.*"

Doubtless, Nye was moved to make this refutation because it was amply clear at that moment that he could have been a Calvin Klein model if he'd wanted to: he was shirtless, tousled, crinkly-eyed, and grinning, having hauled off his sweater to model some garments of his own design. Nye, who is thirty-two years old, and a well-toned size 40, is launching his own men's-clothing label, beginning with a limited range of Matt Nye coats—peacoats, overcoats, and greatcoats—which will be available at Bergdorf's this fall. (A few shirts and pants and a sweater will follow, in his spring, 1999, collection.) Nye's designs are deliberately basic—a bit boyish, a bit nautical—and they are made in sturdy, un-luxe fabrics like cotton knits and wool melton.


Matt Nye

"The name of the game when you are small is being able to turn on a dime and be very accommodating," Nye explained. "I can accommodate reorders, and I can accommodate acquaintances who drop in—I can say, 'Oh, I can get you one.'" Drop in, that is, at the brownstone off Central Park West into which Nye and Wenner moved last fall, after a protracted and much publicized house hunt. Nye works on the top floor, which has been converted into an airy, yellow-painted, skylighted atelier, and it is here that he receives store buyers interested in checking out his line. At one end of the room, by a long-haired white fur rug, Nye's samples hang from picture hooks on the wall. At the other end is a platform bed with a fluffy white duvet, which gives the place a more intimate air than is to be found in many designers' showrooms. "I probably need to work that out a little—put a screen there," Nye acknowledged. "I don't see it as a *bed*room so much as, like, executive napping, or something. But the bed is part of the charm—you get to see a real part of me. I give to you, and you hopefully are going to give back to me, and we will hopefully have a nice relationship."

Nye has been building nice relationships in the fashion industry ever since he arrived in New York, eleven years ago, with a degree in biology from the University of Michigan (his home state). His first job was in Carolina Herrera's mailroom; he studied at F.I.T., and then joined Ralph Lauren, for whom he searched flea markets and thrift stores for design ideas. After meeting Calvin Klein at a party, he went to work for the designer—all the while, he says, preparing to launch his own business.

As a rich man's consort, Nye knows that people will inevitably assume that Wenner is funding his venture, making him a sort of Carolyne Roehm of the nineties. It is a notion that he is quick to refute. "I saved, and I pulled it together, and I am really doing some management here to try to pull this thing off," he said. "I've basically got one shot at it, and, unless it catches on and goes, it is my money." Indeed, Nye conducts his business trips with a new discipline. "All of a sudden, it isn't somebody else's money," he explained. "I'll be looking at a room-service menu, at a cappuccino that's, like, six dollars. If I just walk out on the street and have breakfast, it's ten dollars, versus forty dollars for room service. It takes on a whole new meaning." —REBECCA MEAD

DAFFY DICTIONARY DEPT.

Another reason that the Monica Lewinsky case is no Watergate.

If cockroaches were called cuddlebugs, would they seem nicer? Would Hitler have done quite so much damage if his name had been Schicklgruber? In the sound of a word you can sometimes hear the destiny of a thing. What if the Watergate break-in had happened at the Hay-Adams Hotel, the Jefferson, or a Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge? Would we connect that high political crime with the petty bungling of Travelgate or Nannygate if to do so we had to use phrases like Travel Johnson's or Nanny Adams?

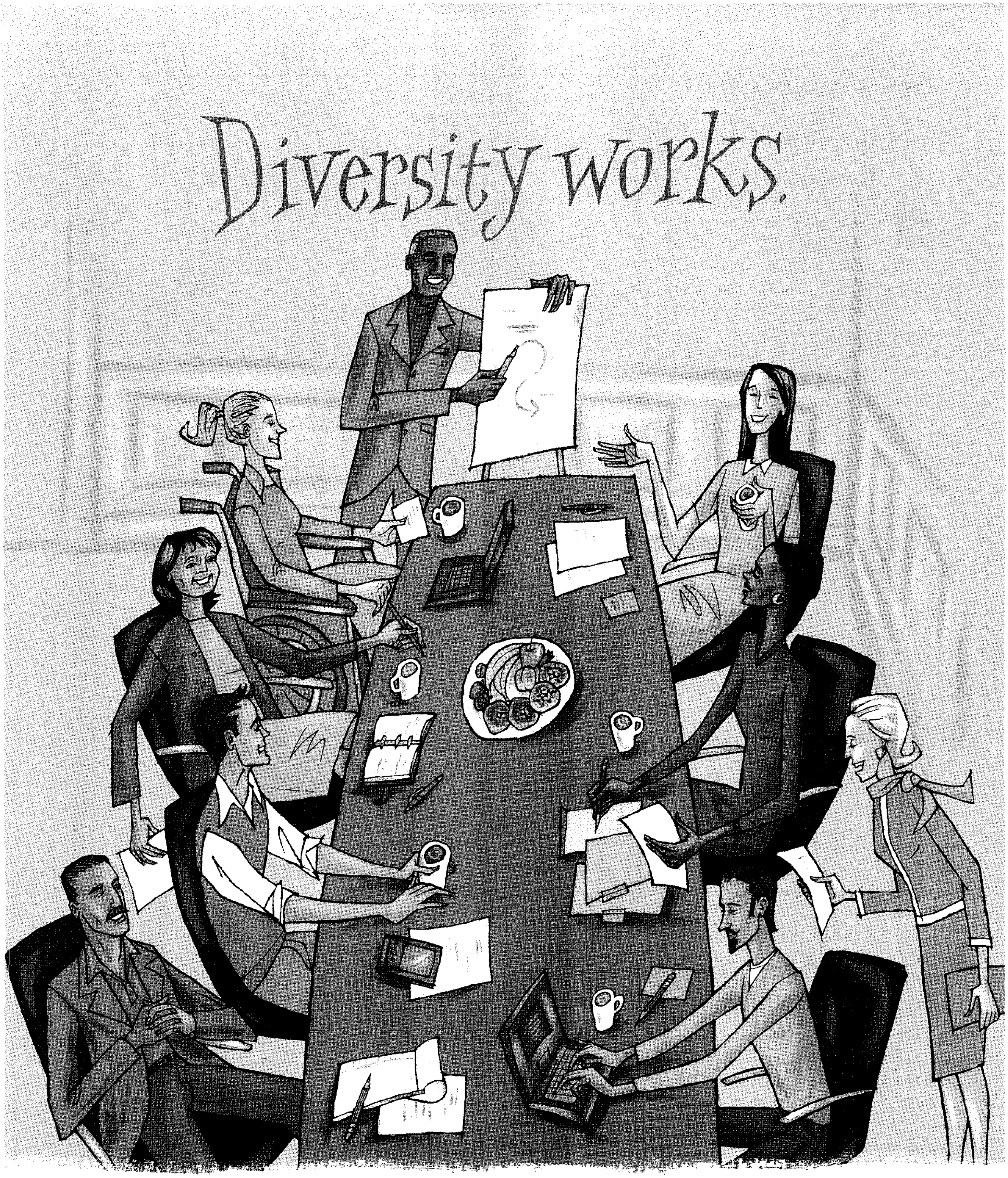
"If Watergate had happened at a Howard Johnson's," said Michael Schudson, the author of "Watergate in American Memory: How We Remember, Forget, and Reconstruct the Past," "I do think we would have a somewhat lesser likelihood—two per cent? ten per cent?—of saying that politics stinks, that it's all some large scandal."

Of the many scandals endured by this country before 1973—Teapot Dome, the XYZ Affair, the Gold Conspiracy, John Adams's Midnight Appointments—none of them developed their own franchises. We were spared a rash of domes. With Watergate, however, everything changed. Since the break-in, we've had Vietgate, Billygate, Sewergate, Contragate, Debategate, Iraqgate, Koreagate, Nannygate, Scalpgate, Travelgate, Filegate, Troopergate, Whitewatergate. Such is the force of the suffix that it has even travelled overseas, into foreign tongues. There have been gates in France and England. There has been a Muldergate and an Inkathagate in South Africa, a Swiftgate in Argentina, and a Narcogate in Colombia.

According to Marshall Blonsky, a Wolfson Fellow in semiotics at the New School, "The sound of a word is of enormous importance. The sound is the lubricant that gets the signifier and its meaning into our consciousness." Travelgate comes trippingly off the tongue, Blonsky says, as does Nannygate. "But Travel Jefferson falls like a worm out of your mouth. And Howard Johnson's—what would that be, Ho Jo? You'd never in a million years have a Nanny Jo."

This is what makes the Monica Lewinsky affair linguistically so interesting: gate doesn't work here. The newspapers have tried out Sexgate and Monicagate, Tailgate and Zippergate—even Fornigate—but none of them stick. These phrases are joined by such drab tags as the Lewinsky episode, the intern affair, the Monica S. Lewinsky case. (In his speech at the White House correspondents' dinner, the President referred to the business obliquely as the week "the Pope went to Cuba," which seems unlikely to catch on.)

Bill Clinton is famous for turning adversity into success, but Marshall Blonsky is astonished at the way even linguistics seems to work out for him. "If you've got a lot of names for something," Blonsky says, "none of them euphonious, then it's as if you don't have *any* name. And if you don't have a name for a thing, then, as far as most people are concerned, you don't have the thing at all." —ADAM LEHNER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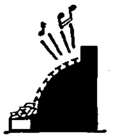
DEPT. OF SALESMANSHIP

What song are your pants singing?



LEAVE it to the Gap to put some significant touches on the generation, you know, gap. A couple of weeks ago, the Gap, whose ads were restored to the tube last winter after twelve years of appearing mostly in print, gave viewers a new one: thirty seconds of teen-agers *jitterbugging* to Louis Prima's 1956 trumpeteering "Jump, Jive an' Wail," and singing, "Baby, baby, it looks like it's gonna hail, you better come inside, let me teach you how to jive and wail, you gotta jump and jive."

"We call it 'Khakis Swing,'" Michael McCadden, the Gap's executive V.P. of marketing, said over the telephone from his San Francisco office the other day. "Last year, it was jeans. This year, it's khakis. Swing is back. So it's 'Khakis Swing.' What's better than Louis Prima?" It was a warm day in San Francisco, McCadden said, and he was wearing his usual—whatever the weather—Gap jeans, Gap blue shirt, and Banana Republic (Gap-owned) loafers. "Swing is here, now," he said. "Everything old is new again. We like that juxtaposition."

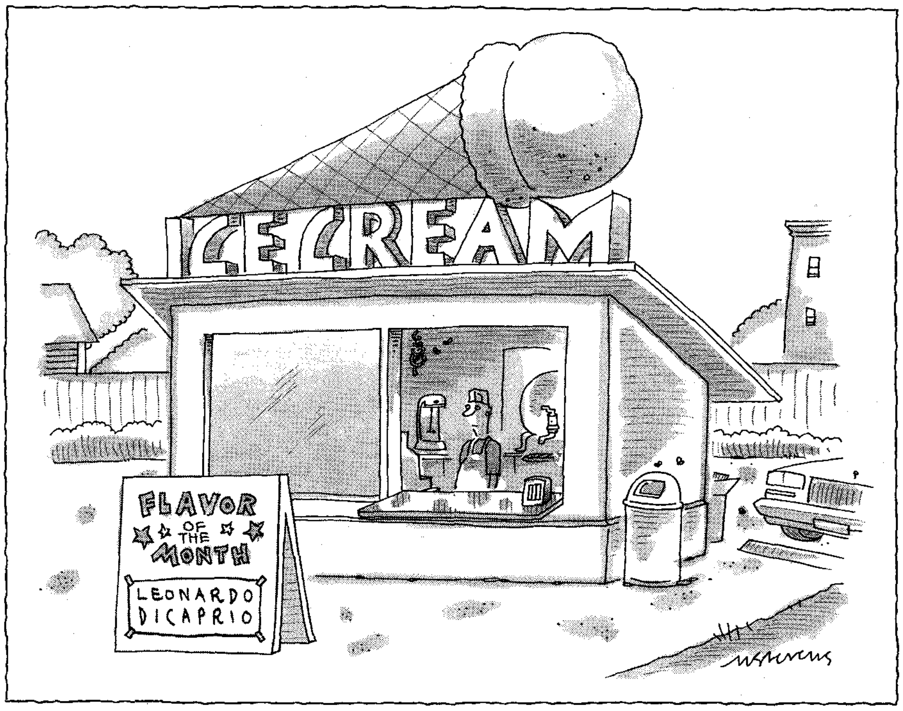
On the same wire, Millard ("Call him Mickey," said McCadden) Drexler, the Gap's C.E.O., said, "Swing is hip. It's right. The hottest thing in New York is the Supper Club, where people wear zoot suits and swing. A must-go place. Our antenna is up. What's better than that?"

In "Khakis Swing," the jitterbug moves include the Sugar, the Fan Kick, the Shorty George, etc. The dancers, as they gyrate and throw each other around, all wear khaki pants but trendy, contemporary everything else. No saddle shoes. Oh, well.

How come khaki?

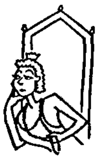
McCadden: "Obviously, we work in advertising, but we rarely do research. We do what *we* like. Research-driven advertising has no heart, no soul. This year, I said to Lisa Prisco, our creative director, 'Khaki!' A week later, she came back to me and said, 'Swing!' How do you bring a new energy to khaki? With swing. '*Khakis* Swing.' We launched it on 'Seinfeld.'" (The Gap is also launching "Khakis Rock" and "Khakis Groove.") "We're reinventing khakis, flat front, low rise, cargo," he continued. "There's something about Gap that transcends age. In advertising, it's called a voice. Our creative voice. It's the way we say who we are."

—LILLIAN ROSS



POSTCARD FROM PARIS

Memorializing Diana, Princess of Wales, with a jumbo light sabre.



LAST September, when the architect Gaetano Pesce was visiting Paris, he happened to pass by the Pont d'Alma, where Diana, Princess of Wales, had met her death weeks earlier. "People were looking inside this tunnel, where no one can go, and I looked around and saw that there was something that I could do," Pesce said last week. He devised a monument: the Diana Memory Column, a four-foot concrete pillar topped by seven feet of translucent resin, which merges with the sky during the daytime and is gently luminescent at night. In a chilling bit of symbolism, it is intended to rise directly above the underground column into which Diana's car plowed. Late last year, the New York-based architect met with Paris cultural-affairs officials, who told him that he would have to get the approval of the British Royal Family. He has enlisted Princess Cecile Hohenlohe-Langenburg, a German relation of Prince Philip's, to schmooze Buckingham Palace; she is due to meet soon with Diana's sister Sarah McCorquodale, who is president of the Princess's memorial fund and exercises a taste veto over all commemorative projects.

Pesce, who built the celebrated "virtual office" for the TBWA Chiat/Day advertising company, in Manhattan, never met Diana but says that he was inspired by her funeral to create his column. "That community, answering to Diana in that way, was a sign that something is changing in our time—that we are touched not only by people who talk to our brain but by people who talk to our hearts." Women are better placed to understand this cultural shift, Pesce contends. "I believe that the future is feminine," he told me. And he brushes off the suggestion that a column is an unlikely symbol for a new femininity. "The material at the top of this column is about flexibility, softness, translucency. It is a warm material, like a skin," he said. Diana, who spent her life snapping royal sceptres in two, would doubtless understand entirely.

—REBECCA MEAD

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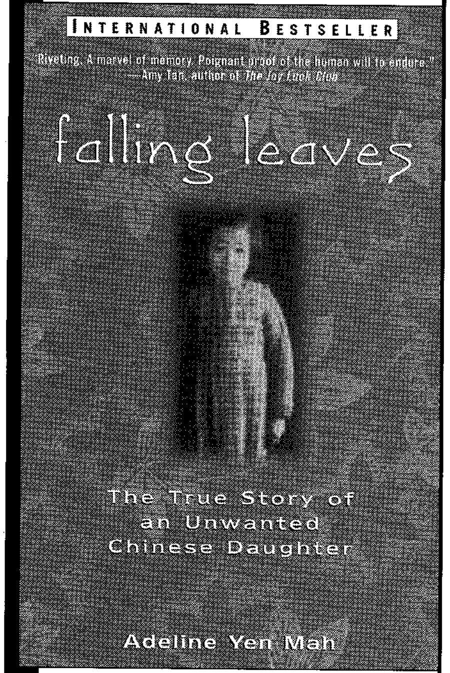
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ANNALS OF DIPLOMACY

THE GENOCIDE FAX

The United Nations was warned about Rwanda. Did anyone care?

BY PHILIP GOUREVITCH

"WE were surprised," a Rwandan diplomat told me after the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, announced that he would be visiting Rwanda this week. "Many people in my country are not happy with Mr. Annan. He was the head of U.N. peacekeeping when U.N. peacekeepers allowed a genocide in Rwanda. But let him come, and he can hear about it directly." In fact, Annan's staff say, the Secretary-General plans to acknowledge the United Nations' sorry record in Rwanda, in the hope of establishing his credibility there. The Rwandan diplomat wondered whether Annan would also answer some questions. "There is the affair of the fax—the famous fax," he said. "Many people have heard of it, and everyone would like to know more."

The famous fax is dated January 11, 1994—three months before the state-sponsored genocide, in which members of the Hutu majority massacred at least eight hundred thousand people from the Tutsi minority and also tens of thousands of Hutus who opposed the genocidal regime. The fax, headed "Request for Protection for Informant," was sent by Major General Roméo Dallaire, the U.N. force commander in Rwanda, to peacekeeping headquarters in New York, and it reported in startling detail the preparations that were under way to carry out precisely such an extermination campaign.

Dallaire's informant was a former member of the security staff of President Juvénal Habyarimana, Rwanda's Hutu dictator. At the time of the fax, the informant was being paid about a thousand dollars a month—a kingly wage in Rwanda—by Habyarimana's political party to compile lists of Tutsis and to train the militiamen known as the *interahamwe* ("those who attack together") to kill them.

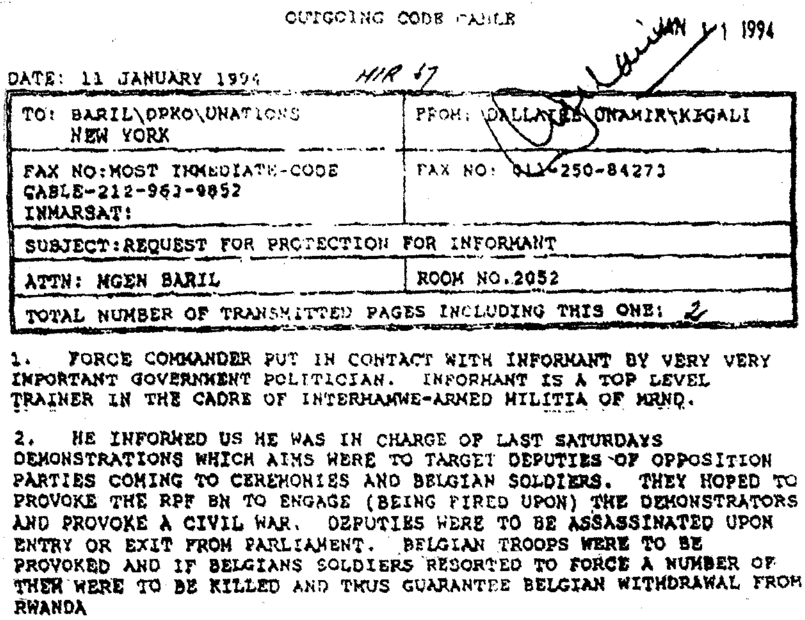
Dallaire, a Québécois, wrote as he speaks, in a clipped military English, and his telegraphic prose underscored the urgency of his message. The peace that his U.N. blue helmets were in Rwanda to keep was a fiction. Throughout the early nineties, government-sponsored massacres of Tutsis had become a regular occurrence, and Habyarimana's political and military cronies, whose ideology was known simply as Hutu Power, wanted them to continue. Their plan, according to Dallaire's informant, was once again to "provoke a civil war," and, as part of that plan, Belgian troops, who formed the backbone of the U.N. force, "were to be provoked and if Belgian soldiers resorted to force a number of them were to be killed and thus guarantee Belgian withdrawal from Rwanda." In the meantime, Dallaire's informant had been "ordered to register all Tutsi in Kigali," and Dallaire wrote, "He suspects it is for their extermination. Example he gave was that in twenty minutes his personnel could kill up to a thousand Tutsis."

As it happened, everything Dallaire's informant told him came true three months later. "He believes the President does not have full control over all elements of his old party/faction," Dallaire wrote, and, sure enough, on April 6, 1994, Habyarimana was assassinated—a move that created a pretext for the most radical elements of Hutu Power to seize control of the state and implement their program. The next morning, Rwandan troops captured, tortured, murdered, and mutilated ten Belgian blue helmets, whereupon Belgium—Rwanda's former colonial ruler—called the rest of its force home, triggering the collapse of the U.N. mission. During the hundred days that followed Habyarimana's death, an average of more than five Tutsis were murdered every minute in Rwanda, and it became clear that Dallaire's informant had not exaggerated the industrial killing capacity of the *interahamwe*.

Why had Dallaire's source told him so much? Because, Dallaire wrote, "he disagrees with anti-Tutsi extermination." The informant had offered to assist the U.N. force in raiding *interahamwe* weapons caches, and all he asked in return was U.N. protection for himself, his wife, and their four children. Dallaire was eager to act. He announced his intention to raid an arms cache within thirty-six hours, and he recommended that his superiors in New York help the informant be "evacuated out of Rwanda."

DALLAIRE'S fax was, of course, a confidential document, and it remained secret until November of 1995, when it was described in the London *Observer.* A copy of the fax was then published in Belgium, where the news that the United Nations had known for months of Hutu Power's intention to massacre Belgian troops caused a furor.

Dallaire had labelled his fax "most immediate," addressed it to his superior in peacekeeping—Major General Maurice Baril, a fellow-Québécois—and signed off in French: "*Peux ce que veux. Allons-y.*" ("Where there's a will there's a way. Let's go.") Reports soon appeared in the Belgian press explaining that the response from U.N. headquarters had been: Let's not. Dallaire, the reports said, had been expressly instructed to refrain from taking any direct preventive action. But the document containing these instructions failed to surface, and its author remained unidentified, so it was impossible to determine how high in the U.N. hierarchy Dallaire's fax had gone. Had it reached the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Kofi Annan? The Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali? The Security Council?



OUTGOING CODE CABLE

JAN 11 1994

DATE: 11 JANUARY 1994 H/R 17

TO: BARIL\DPKO\UNATIONS NEW YORK

FROM: DALLAIRE\UNAMIR\KIGALI

FAX NO:MOST IMMEDIATE-CODE CABLE-212-963-9852

INMARSAT:

FAX NO: 011-250-84273

SUBJECT:REQUEST FOR PROTECTION FOR INFORMANT

ATTN: MGEN BARIL

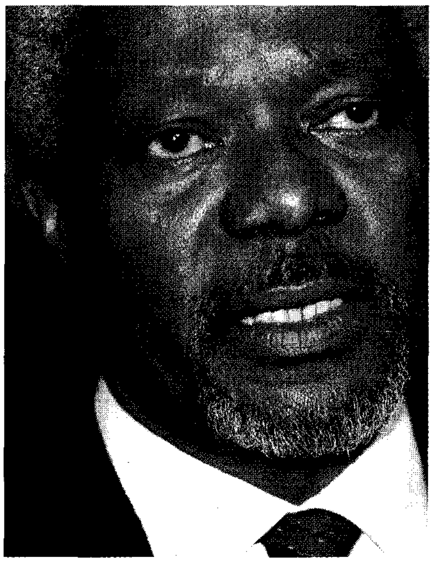
ROOM NO.2052

TOTAL NUMBER OF TRANSMITTED PAGES INCLUDING THIS ONE: 2

1. FORCE COMMANDER PUT IN CONTACT WITH INFORMANT BY VERY VERY IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT POLITICIAN. INFORMANT IS A TOP LEVEL TRAINER IN THE CADRE OF INTERHAMWE-ARMED MILITIA OF MRND.

2. HE INFORMED US HE WAS IN CHARGE OF LAST SATURDAYS DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH AIMS WERE TO TARGET DEPUTIES OF OPPOSITION PARTIES COMING TO CEREMONIES AND BELGIAN SOLDIERS. THEY HOPED TO PROVOKE THE RPF BN TO ENGAGE (BEING FIRED UPON) THE DEMONSTRATORS AND PROVOKE A CIVIL WAR. DEPUTIES WERE TO BE ASSASSINATED UPON ENTRY OR EXIT FROM PARLIAMENT. BELGIAN TROOPS WERE TO BE PROVOKED AND IF BELGIANS SOLDIERS RESORTED TO FORCE A NUMBER OF THEM WERE TO BE KILLED AND THUS GUARANTEE BELGIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM RWANDA

This week, Secretary-General Kofi Annan travels to Rwanda, where people are asking who saw a fax sent by Canadian General Roméo Dallaire (top) in 1994, detailing the Hutu government's plans for genocide.



TOP PHOTO: AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTO/BRENNAN LINSLEY; BOTTOM PHOTO: FRANK FOURNIER/CONTACT PRESS

With Annan's elevation to the office of Secretary-General last year, the questions only intensified, causing Annan's spokesman, Fred Eckhard, to complain, "We're taking a bum rap on this." But somebody with access to U.N. files disagreed with Eckhard, and one day my fax machine rang and a copy of the missing response to Dallaire spun into my office. It bore the same date as Dallaire's fax, it was also labelled "most immediate," and its subject was "Contacts with Informant." It had been sent under the name of Kofi Annan, bearing the signature of Iqbal Riza, who was Annan's deputy in the peacekeeping office and is now his chief of staff.

"New York," as U.N. people call headquarters, told Dallaire that the "operation contemplated" in his fax—and the extension of protection to the informant—could not be allowed under the Rwanda peacekeeping mandate imposed by the Security Council. Instead, Dallaire was instructed that if he was "convinced that the information provided by informant is absolutely reliable" he should share it with President Habyarimana, and inform him that the activities of the *interahamwe* "represent a clear threat to the peace process" and a "clear violation" of the "Kigali weapons-secure area." Dallaire was also told to share his information with the Ambassadors to Rwanda from Belgium, France, and the United States—the primary foreign sponsors of Rwanda's so-called peace process.

Never mind that Dallaire's informant had explicitly described the plans to exterminate Tutsis and assassinate Belgians as emanating from Habyarimana's court: the mandate said that peace-treaty violations should be reported to the President, and New York advised Dallaire, "You should assume that he"—Habyarimana—"is not aware of these activities, but insist that he must immediately look into the situation."

Dallaire did as he was told, and—but for the genocide—that might have been the end of the matter. Not surprisingly, Dallaire's informant stopped informing, and last year, when the Belgian Senate established a commission to sort out the circumstances under which some of its soldiers had been slaughtered while on duty for the U.N., Kofi Annan refused to allow

Mother's Day
May 10

“What the hell do you want? You know this is my busiest day, Mother!”

• •

General Dallaire to testify. In a letter to the Belgian government, Annan explained that past and present U.N. officials were protected by diplomatic immunity, and he did not see how waiving that immunity was “in the interest of the Organization.”

“THE issue here is a lack of judgment and historical memory,” Alain Destexhe, a Belgian senator, who has written several books about the international response to the Rwandan genocide, told me recently. “I would like to know if ever before, in the years since 1945, the U.N. has received a fax or a cable announcing an extermination. Look at that word: ‘extermination’—registering Tutsis, killing a thousand Tutsis in twenty minutes. You should be alarmed by that. You should think of the Jews. I really don't understand it. President Clinton is obliged to justify himself for fund-raising phone calls from the White House and alleged sexual harassment, and we're talking about a million people killed, so I think the U.N. should be accountable. How can anyone sensibly think of reporting the crimes of the President of Rwanda to the President of Rwanda and pretend that he has dealt with this matter responsibly? How could such a fax not be passed on immediately to the Security Council and all the member states? How can we be left to wonder whether even the Secretary-General”—Boutros-Ghali—“saw it?”

Last year, I read Dallaire's fax to one of Boutros-Ghali's closest aides, who said that he had never heard of it before. “It's astonishing,” he said, “an amazing document, incredibly dramatic. I never heard of anything like that, and I find it incredible to imagine that it could not reach the Secretary-General. This is all at a level of drama that I don't remember experiencing except once or twice in the last five years at the U.N. It's just incredible that a fax like that could come in and not be noticed.”

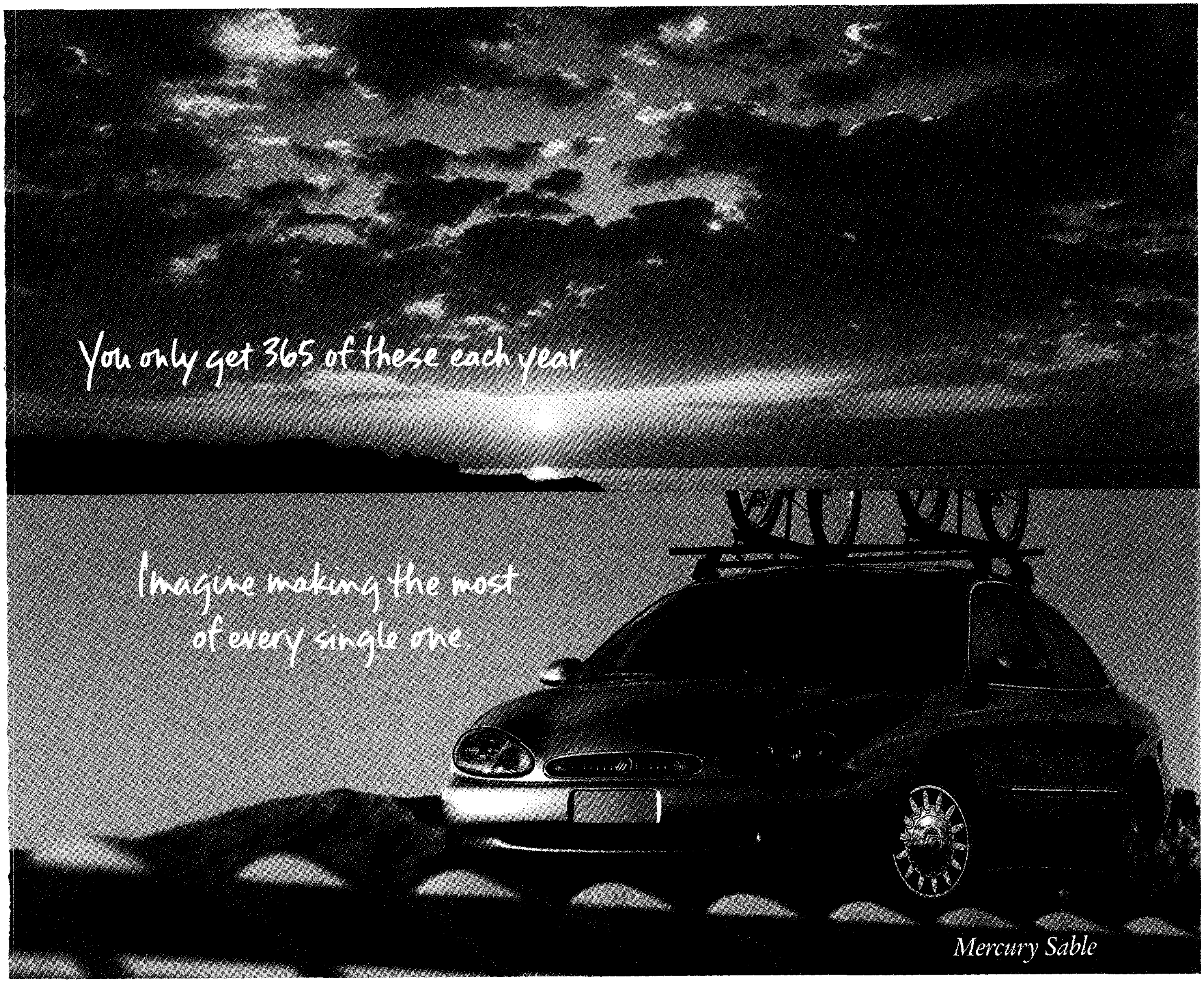
In fact, by 1996 Boutros-Ghali was at least aware of Dallaire's fax, because he referred to it, in an introduction to a volume on Rwanda, saying, “Such situations and alarming reports from the field, though considered with the utmost seriousness by United Nations officials, are not uncommon within the context of peace-keeping operations.”

When I read Boutros-Ghali's words to Destexhe, I could almost hear him shuddering over the phone from Brussels. “Not uncommon?” he said. “Extermination? No no no.” Last week, I asked Iqbal Riza, Annan's deputy, whether Boutros-Ghali would have seen the correspondence. “He should have,” Riza said, adding that according to “standard practice every code cable or every fax of this nature will be copied to the Secretary-General's office” and then sorted by “a staff that decides what paper goes to him.”

Boutros-Ghali's aide told me that he was certain “Boutros didn't see the actual document,” but that it was likely he had “heard the essence of it, in summary.” Riza said, “That's credible.” During that period, daily cable traffic was “a stack about a foot high,” Riza explained, and Dallaire's fax “was not a report on a serious incident, where there were casualties, or something like that,” but “something that was forecast.” If the forecast had come true “a week later or something,” Riza said, then “I think they would have said, ‘Yes, there is this fax, and this is what happened.’ ”

THE fact that Kofi Annan's name is printed atop the reply to Dallaire's fax suggests that he was its author, or at least the one ultimately responsible for its contents. But Riza, whose signature appears on the response to Dallaire's fax, claims that that wasn't the case. At the time, he said, the United Nations was overseeing seventeen peacekeeping missions, and “there was no way that one person could look after them all.” So duties in New York were divided, and Riza found himself in charge of Rwanda. “I was responsible,” he said, adding, “This is not to say that Mr. Annan was oblivious of what was going on. No. Part of my responsibility was to keep him informed and, in fact, to ask for guidance when I felt that was necessary. So he would have seen this paper, maybe, you know, whenever he had time—two or three days later, when he went through his copies. So that takes care of that question.”

In hindsight, Riza told me, “you can see all this very clearly—when you are sitting with your papers before you, with your music on, or whatever, and you can say, ‘Ah, look, there's this.’ When it's happening in the heat of the moment, it's something else.” He described the Dallaire fax as just one piece of an ongoing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daily communication. "We get hyperbole in many reports," he said, adding that, in the months that followed, "incidents continued, but there was no sign to corroborate" Dallaire's warning.

Riza reminded me that the Belgian, French, and United States Embassies in Rwanda had been advised of Dallaire's information. "If those governments, especially the Belgians, had serious fears about what was going to happen, do you think they would have kept quiet?" he asked. "They would have battered down our doors." On the other hand, Riza stressed that the caution with which the Rwanda peacekeeping mandate was interpreted had to be understood in the context of the moment—and the context was "the shadow of Somalia."

During 1993, dozens of peacekeepers died in Somalia. In the two most spectacular incidents, twenty-three Pakistanis serving with the U.N. and eighteen American soldiers serving under their own command were killed. The American deaths occurred in October, and Riza said, "If we had gone to the Security Council three months after Somalia, I can assure you no government would have said, 'Yes, here are our boys for an offensive operation in Rwanda.'" How could he be so sure? Because, one of his aides told me, even in April of 1994, when the body count in Rwanda was leaping from the tens of thousands to the hundreds of thousands, the Security Council did not see fit to act. And another U.N. staffer said, "You do understand, I hope, that when we are talking about Rwanda and we speak of member states, we are speaking in particular about Washington."

It was true that the Clinton Administration had lost its appetite for peacekeeping operations after Somalia. In the wake of that debacle, the White House produced a document called Presidential Decision Directive 25, which amounted to a checklist of reasons to avoid involvement in U.N. peacekeeping missions. It hardly mattered that no American troops were involved in Rwanda; when the genocide began, the Administration's policy was that the U.N. should get out of Rwanda completely, and the original force of two thousand five hundred men was reduced to an ineffectual squad of two hundred and seventy. Dallaire begged for reinforcements, and his pleas were seconded by Boutros-Ghali, but, as the dead piled up in Rwanda, the United States successfully obstructed the Security Council from heeding their call.

"We—the international community—should have been more active in the early stages of the atrocities in Rwanda," Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said last December on a visit to Africa, setting the stage for President Clinton's more forceful apology, this spring in Kigali. In the same spirit, Annan's staff are fond of saying, "The whole world failed Rwanda." Annan himself recently told the French newspaper *Libération*, "I remember saying at the time, 'If a genocide does not push us to intervene, what can make us budge?'" It was a good question. Once the current round of mea culpas is over, we will still be left to wonder whether the genocide might have been thwarted before it had begun.

On May 2, 1994, when the extermination of Tutsis was at its peak in Rwanda, Kofi Annan travelled to Washington to address a Senate hearing on U.N. peacekeeping operations. In the course of his testimony, he said, "Under our rules of engagement, they"—peacekeepers—"have the right to defend themselves, and we define self-defense in a manner that includes preëmptive military action to remove those armed elements who are preventing you from doing your work. And yet our commanders in the field, whether in Somalia and Bosnia, have been very reticent about using force."

In the light of Dallaire's fax, Annan's failure to mention Rwanda is striking. After all, Dallaire hadn't asked for the permission that Annan denied him, to take preëmptive action against the Hutu Power arsenals; he simply announced his plan to raid weapons caches. Dallaire has said that he considered such action to be entirely consistent with his rules of engagement, and he has repeatedly stated that with five thousand well-equipped men he could have saved hundreds of thousands of lives in Rwanda.

Last September, Dallaire went on Canadian television and said of his tour in Rwanda, "I'm fully responsible for the decisions of the ten Belgian soldiers dying, of others dying, of several of my soldiers being injured and falling sick because we ran out of medical supplies, of fifty-six Red Cross people being killed, of two million people being displaced and made refugees, and about a million Rwandans being killed—because the mission failed, and I consider myself intimately involved with that responsibility." But Dallaire resisted "passing the buck" to the U.N. system. Instead, he passed it on to the member states of the Security Council and the General Assembly. If, in the face of a genocide, governments fear placing their soldiers at risk, "then don't send soldiers, send Boy Scouts," he said.

"I haven't even started my real mourning of the apathy and the absolute detachment of the international community—particularly the Western world—from the plight of Rwandans," Dallaire went on. "Because, fundamentally, to be very candid and soldierly, who the hell cared about Rwanda? . . . We know the genocide of the Second World War because the whole outfit was involved. . . . Who really comprehends that more people were killed, injured, and displaced in three and a half months in Rwanda than in the whole of the Yugoslavian campaign, in which we poured sixty thousand troops and more. The whole of the Western world is there—we're pouring billions in there, and we're still in there trying to solve the problem. Who is really trying to solve the Rwandan problem? Who is grieving Rwanda and really living it and living with the consequences? I mean, there are hundreds of Rwandans whom I knew personally, whom I found slaughtered with their families complete—and bodies up to here—villages totally wiped out. . . . And we made all that information available daily and the international community kept watching."

Dallaire was in uniform as he faced the camera; his graying hair was closely cropped; he held his square jaw firmly outthrust; his chest was dappled with decorations. He said, "The root of it is: What does the international community really want the U.N. to do?" He said, "The U.N. simply wasn't given the tools." And he said, "We did not want to take on the Rwandan Armed Forces and the *interahamwe*."

Listening to Dallaire, I wondered, What would happen if a fax like his were to arrive at U.N. headquarters today? ♦

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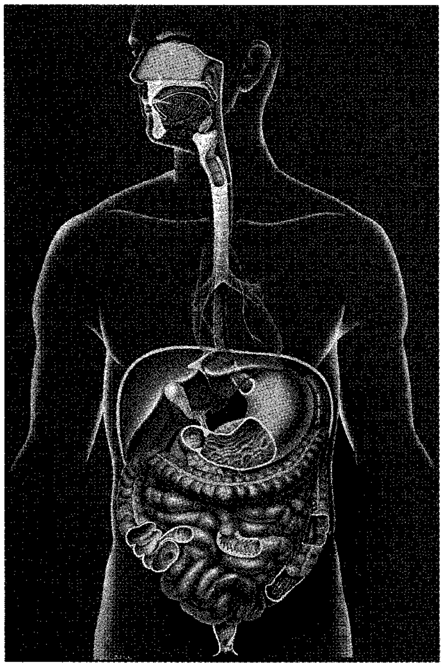
MEDICAL DISPATCHES

THE SHADOW EPIDEMIC

Why does the Surgeon General want letters sent to hundreds of thousands of people informing them that they might be dying?

BY JEROME GROOPMAN



Three million Americans do not know that they have been infected.

LEONARD DANK/ANATOMYWORKS

Last autumn, Dominique Benet called me and asked to be referred to a physician. She is a neighbor and friend who manages a bookstore in downtown Boston. Dominique said that she had no specific worries, but as she was turning thirty-five, she thought that it was time for a checkup. I recommended a young woman internist at our hospital. Four weeks later, Dominique called again: she had just been told that she had hepatitis C.

“You’re sure it’s C?” I asked, trying to contain my concern. “Not A or B?”

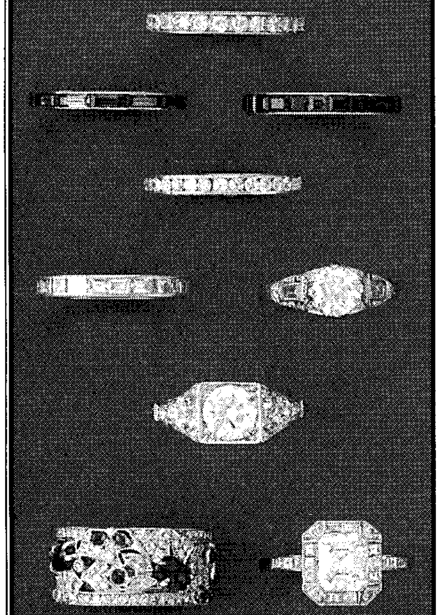
Dominique was certain. She was also upset and confused. “It’s hard to believe I’m carrying a potentially fatal virus and yet I don’t feel ill.” She knew nothing about hepatitis C. She had consulted a liver specialist, but he wasn’t able to give her any clear answers about what to expect. She wanted my help.

Because I have a background in oncology and immunology, I have been interested in hepatitis C for some time. In 1991, I chaired a committee that advised the Food and Drug Administration on the risks and benefits of a hepatitis drug, and I’ve been studying how the virus may make liver cells cancerous. I have also cared for many patients in the advanced stages of the disease, unable to prevent their deaths. I asked Dominique for permission to speak with her doctors, and then we’d talk again.

Her internist told me that Dominique seemed perfectly healthy when she was examined, but the routine lab tests conducted on her blood samples revealed a slight abnormality in the liver enzymes. The increases were so minimal that some doctors might have dismissed them as innocuous—signs of someone who had had a few glasses of wine the night before, or was suffering a bad cold. Dominique, however, did not drink alcohol, and hadn’t been ill all autumn. A test to screen for viral hepatitis revealed antibodies to type C. Another test found the virus itself in her blood.

Dominique’s case is typical: Hepatitis C is one of the most clandestine of viruses. It infects healthy people who have no idea that they are being attacked by something they can’t even detect.

Over the past two decades, there has been a hepatitis-C epidemic, but it has been overshadowed by AIDS: as physicians, public-health officials, and politicians have focussed on H.I.V., hepatitis C has been silently spreading. Today, it affects four times more people than H.I.V. in the United States. Approximately four million Americans, nine million Europeans, and a hundred and seventy million people worldwide are infected with hepatitis C. In contrast, about a million Americans are thought to be H.I.V. positive. Some four per cent of people between the ages



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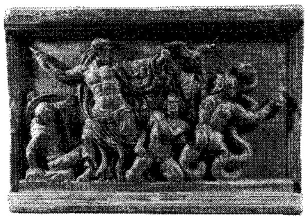

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of thirty and fifty are believed to carry the virus; among black American men, it's ten per cent. Each year, there are an estimated thirty thousand new infections and ten thousand deaths. There is no broadly effective treatment, and if none is developed over the next decade, the death rate from hepatitis C could rise to thirty thousand a year—a mortality rate roughly equal to that of AIDS in 1996.

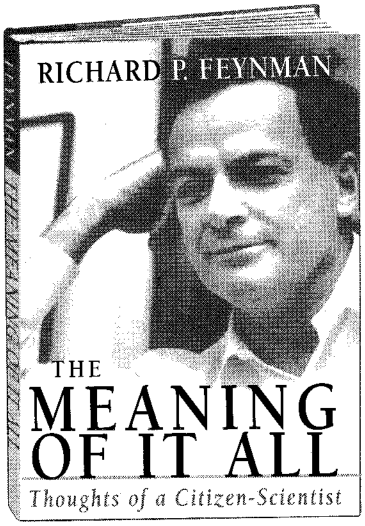
Hepatitis C is an insidious virus. Most people who come down with hepatitis A or B develop fever, loss of appetite, fatigue, and jaundice: they know they are ill. Most people who contract hepatitis C have no signs or symptoms. What's more, if one contracts hepatitis A—typically by eating contaminated food—the body efficiently purges the virus over a period of weeks or months and establishes lifelong immunity to future exposure. Hepatitis B, transmitted by blood-borne or sexual routes, is also efficiently defeated by the host: about ninety-five per cent of infected adults recover and become immune. But our immune defenses are largely unable to prevent hepatitis C from taking up permanent residence in the liver and the blood. Each time our antibodies and T cells come to recognize and attack the virus, it changes form and escapes. Eighty-five per cent of hepatitis-C infections therefore persist for life—and the infected person often has no symptoms for a decade or more. The onset of symptoms can be devastating: the consequences of a ravaged liver can be hemorrhage, delirium, and death.

FEW people are aware that they are carrying hepatitis C until it has severely damaged the liver: In the United States, it's believed that only about a quarter of the cases have been diagnosed. Approximately three million Americans do not know that they are infected with the virus, or that they could be passing it on to others. Hepatitis C is transmitted primarily by infected blood. Before screening for the virus was adopted, about eighty thousand people a year became infected from transfusions with tainted blood. Intravenous drug users in urban areas in America and Europe have an alarmingly high rate of infection: it varies from fifty to nearly ninety per cent in some surveys. Body piercing and tattooing with non-sterile needles have also been implicated in the spread of the virus. Infection can even occur from a nick from a razor blade or the bristle of a toothbrush recently used by an infected person.

Dominique and I discussed how she might have contracted the virus. She is from a close, middle-class French-Canadian family in New Hampshire; her mother is a nurse and her father an actuary. (Patients' names and certain identifying details have been changed in this piece.) She could have been infected through sex. Dominique was not promiscuous, but she had had unprotected intercourse with men she didn't really know well. Up to twenty per cent of hepatitis-C cases can be attributed to sexual exposure, although it is not yet clear what kind of exposure poses the greatest risk. Kissing does not appear to pass the virus, for example, but it can be passed during vaginal or anal intercourse: small amounts of blood can be present in semen and vaginal secretions.

We eliminated other forms of transmission: she hadn't been transfused or tattooed and hadn't used intravenous drugs. But she had, it turned out, occasionally used cocaine. "I started in my junior year in college," she told me. "There was more work than I felt confident I could handle. I'd procrastinate, go to movies, watch TV, drop in on friends. I was aiming to go to business school, and wasn't sure I'd make the grades. So I began to snort cocaine, before exams or a big paper, to get a buzz, to stay awake, to take away the fear." She graduated with honors, but by the time she enrolled in business school she could no longer concentrate on her studies and dropped out. Her parents persuaded her to enter a detox program in Vermont. She hadn't used cocaine—or alcohol or any other drug—for more than a decade.

I told her that her earlier cocaine use could have been responsible for her infection. Cocaine powerfully constricts the blood vessels in the nose, and the result is often ulceration of the nasal lining and pinpoint bleeding. When someone infected with hepatitis C inhales cocaine through a straw, microscopic droplets of blood-tinged mucus collect at the upper end of the straw and form a scrim of viral-laden material. Sharing the straw moves the virus around a circle of users, with each subsequent user inhaling the virus, along with the



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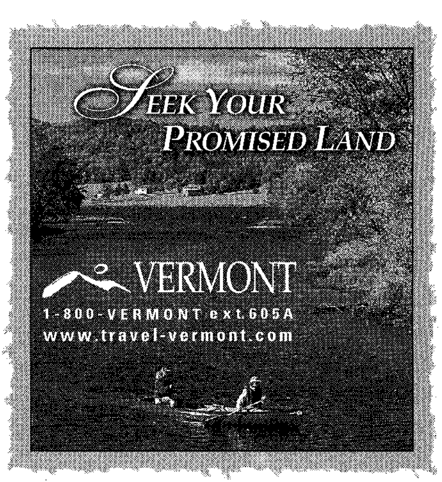

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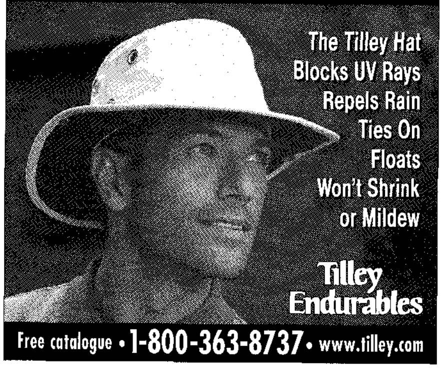

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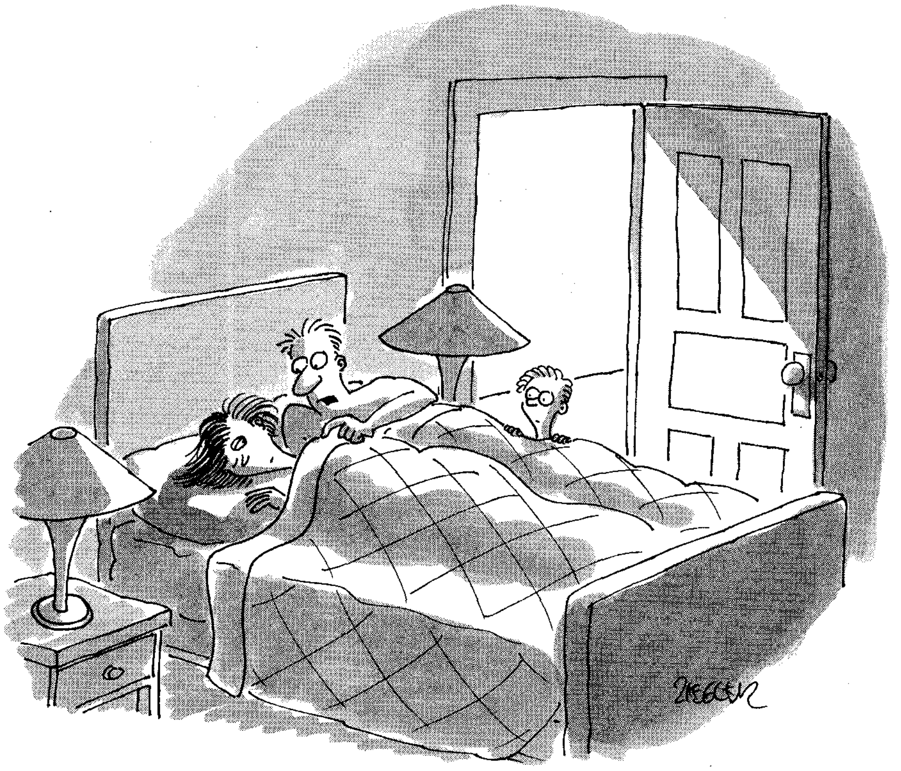
drug, into the vulnerable nasal lining.

There are other ways that the virus can be passed along—during childbirth, for example. But a disturbing fact of the disease is that up to a third of the people who discover they have hepatitis C don't know when, how, or from whom they got it.

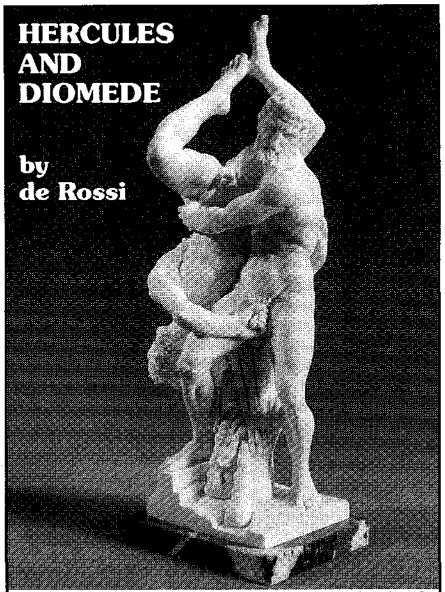
The origins of the hepatitis-C epidemic are obscure. Unlike H.I.V., which is the scion of a family of immunodeficiency viruses found in many primates, hepatitis C is not closely related to any animal viruses and stands alone. H.I.V. had been endemic in sub-Saharan Africa, arrived in Europe in the late nineteen-seventies, and was then spread throughout the world by a mobile and sexually active population. By contrast, the hepatitis-C virus is believed to have been in our midst for many decades.

The virus was first clinically recognized in 1975—as a form of hepatitis distinct from types A and B—but it was not identified until 1989. (After efforts to isolate an intact infectious microbe had proved unsuccessful, a group of researchers at the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and a biotechnology company named Chiron successfully pieced together the virus by genetic cloning.) A blood test for hepatitis C was developed in 1990 and had been refined by 1992.

Last year, in March, the National Institutes of Health held a two-day consensus development conference on hepatitis C. The grim finding was that very little is yet known about it. Data on the course of the infection are scant (because many infected people come to medical attention only after several years), so our ability to predict the virus's effect on a patient is poor. Some people will live a normal life span without the virus's significantly damaging the liver; other people develop irreversible scarring and distortion of the organ, resulting in fatal liver failure or cancer. And there are other questions. Why is it that a person can be infected and have no symptoms, even while the virus is destroying the liver? Symptoms that are typical of viral infection—fever, sweats, fatigue, and anorexia—are all healthy indicators of our immune system's doing battle with an engaged microbial foe. What is happening with hepatitis C? One hypothesis is that it is a master of disguises. When people become infected with it, they actually contract not a single strain but a swarm of viruses, each in a different cloak. And a foe capable of regularly



"I thought it was just one of those bad dreams, but apparently, honey, we have a kid."



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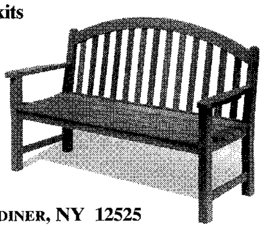

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changing its appearance may evade a pitched battle. Another hypothesis is that it carries internal core proteins that can disarm the immune response.

In answering these questions, physicians and scientists face a fundamental problem. If we are to understand how a virus attacks cells and reproduces, it must be cultured in a test tube. Hepatitis C cannot yet be grown outside the body. This means that it is extremely difficult to devise a means of blocking or poisoning it. The polio vaccine was made possible only by the discovery of how to grow polio virus in cells in the laboratory. The same basic step underlies all the remarkable advances made against H.I.V., a virus similar in size and complexity to hepatitis C. Researchers are currently studying hepatitis-C genes and proteins, but only as bits and pieces, outside the dynamic environment of an infected cell. Many scientists, including several in my laboratory, have tried and failed to devise a culture system. Key H.I.V. enzymes have been analyzed within the culture system, and, as a result, a diversity of drugs have been developed to contain the virus. These drugs, used in combination, have had a profound impact. This year, a study showed more than a forty-per-cent reduction in AIDS deaths. For many, H.I.V. is being transmuted from a sure death sentence to a chronic controlled condition.

In 1997, the N.I.H. budget for H.I.V. research totalled a billion and a half dollars, or about sixteen hundred dollars per infected person in the country. In contrast, the N.I.H. spent twenty-five million on hepatitis-C research the same year. That is about six dollars per infected person.

IN 1983, a forty-six-year-old teacher named Donald Brady required urgent coronary-artery bypass surgery for unrelenting angina. During the operation, he received scores of blood products. The operation was successful: the blood flow to Donald's heart was restored. He returned to an active life as a prep-school Latin teacher and the head of a growing family. But in 1993 he came back to the hospital, complaining of fatigue. After he underwent various tests, his condition was diagnosed as advanced cirrhosis—an irreversible scarring and distortion of the liver. Over the next months, the globes of his eyes turned a

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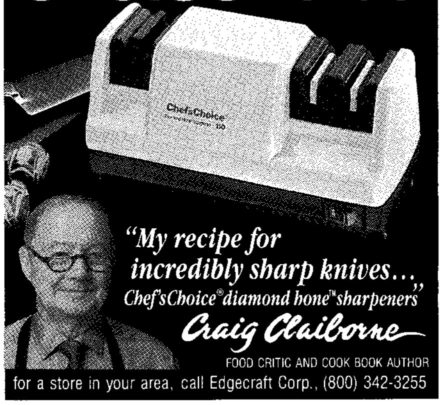

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Everything it touches and that touches it but not this storm
That shows the end of the mountains where lie love,
Friendship, and work, if only I can find them
With the help of these extravagant flashes and the rain
That spends its wild excitement on the water.

—Kenneth Koch

ghoulish mango color, and his skin became pocked with spidery capillaries. The blood that had helped to save his life in 1983 now threatened to end it.

Donald's abdomen began to swell from retained fluid, or ascites. "What should I call the baby?" he joked grimly. He then developed bleeding, first from the nose and then into the skin and the stomach.

As a hematologist, I was asked to assist in managing the bleeding. There was little that could be done. The liver was so badly damaged that it could no longer produce the proteins that mesh into the fabric of a clot. Donald's platelets, the tiny cells that are also essential to clot formation, were dangerously low as well, a common consequence of cirrhosis. A cirrhotic liver blocks the normal flow of blood in the abdomen and the blockage causes the adjoining spleen to balloon. As the spleen increases in size from a fist to a football, it sequesters the body's platelets. What's more, with the normal flow of blood blocked, the veins that line the stomach and the esophagus also start to balloon. These veins, or varices, are particularly fragile, and, expanded, they readily rupture.

Donald bled repeatedly from ruptured varices over the months I cared for him. Sometimes the blood gushed into his stomach, and he vomited it out. He would then be rushed to the hospital, an expandable tube would be thrust down his esophagus, the bleeding varices would be compressed, and ligatures would be placed around them to try to prevent another such episode. At other times, the blood slowly trickled down his intestines. The blood would then be digested and absorbed into his circulation, but his failing liver could not detoxify the released substances: the toxic detritus eventually passed into Donald's brain, subtly at first, so that he was just inattentive, but it would then build up so that he was at the point of delirium. Again, he would be brought to the hospital, and his stomach would be lavaged, his bowels purged, and a tube inserted to search for the sources of the blood.

We all knew it was just a matter of time before he would die, so desperate measures were considered. There is no effective treatment for patients with advanced cirrhosis. Their only real hope is a liver transplant. This can buy some years before the transplanted liver, too, becomes infected from the virus-laden blood and fails. But no donor was found in time for Don Brady. He ultimately succumbed to an uncontrolled hemorrhage. Donald's death was not unusual. Within five years of diagnosis, half the patients with advanced cirrhosis caused by hepatitis C will be dead.

In 1991, the F.D.A. considered contacting people, like Don Brady, who had received tainted blood. The newly developed blood-screening tests were starting to identify donors infected with hepatitis C. While my committee was

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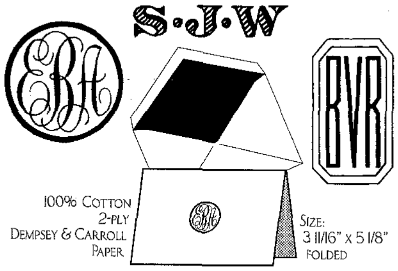
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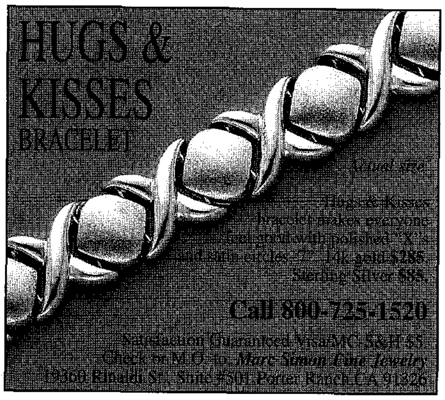
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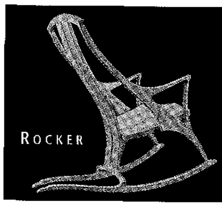
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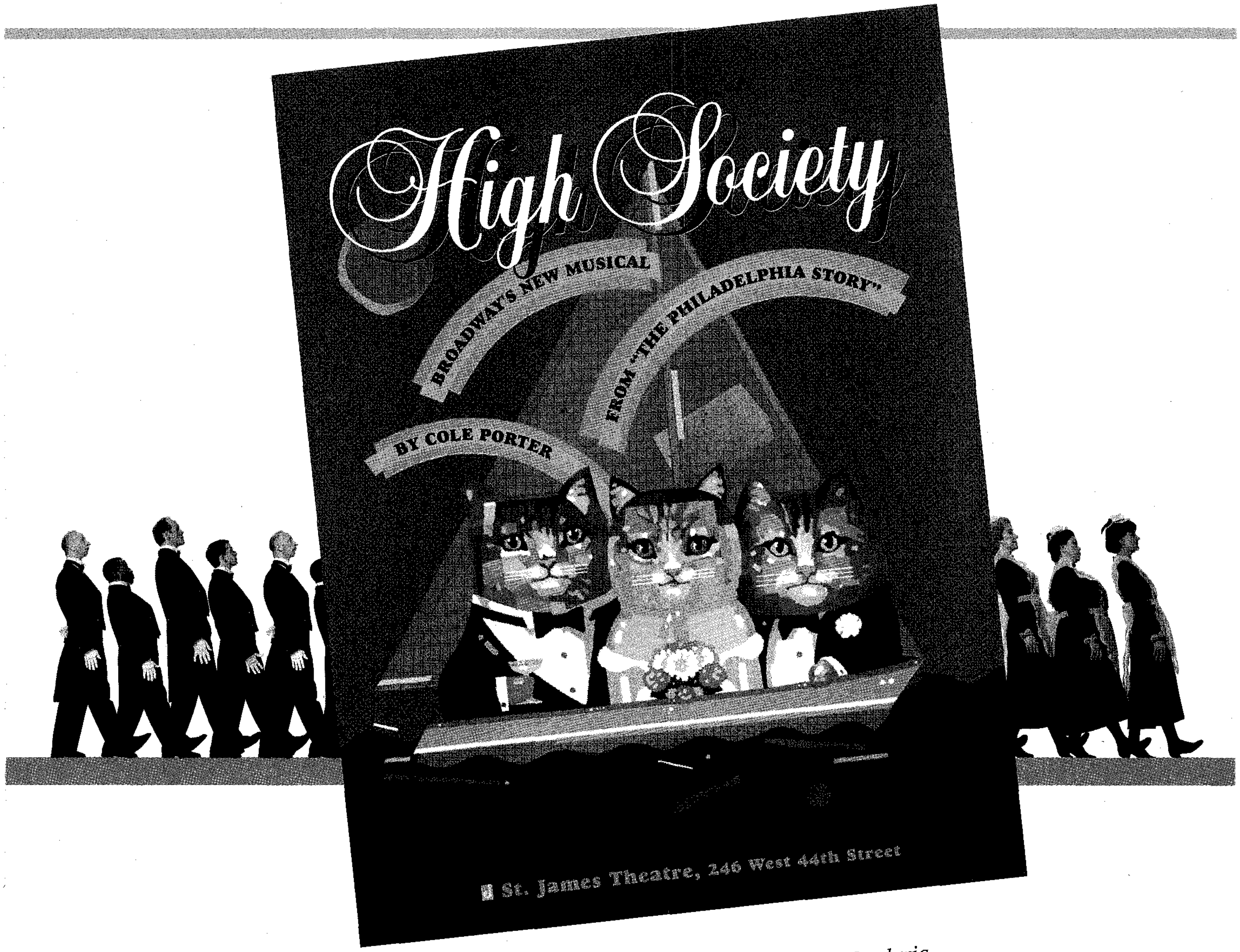
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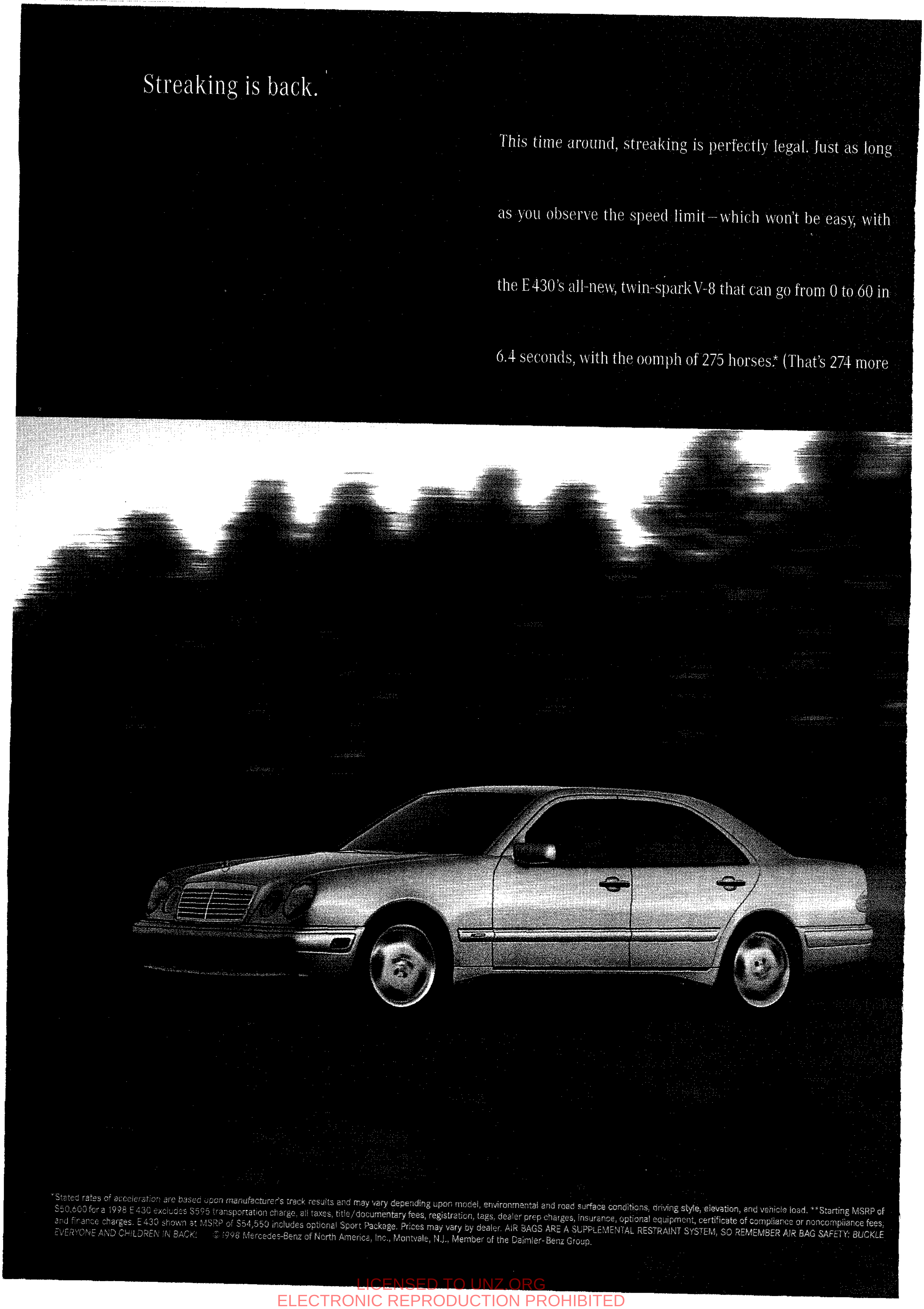

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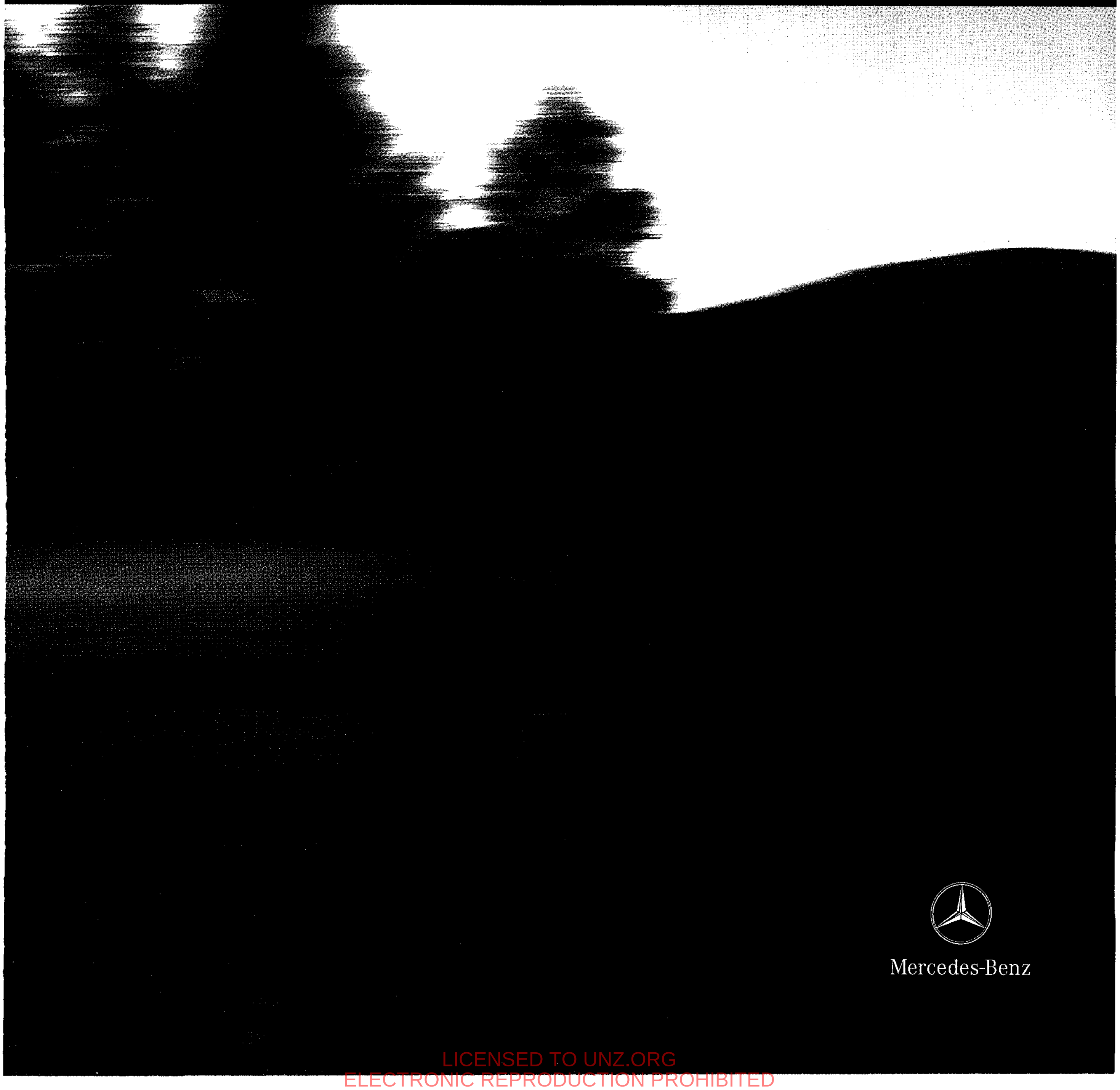

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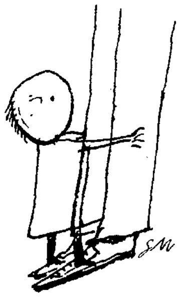
evaluating a possible drug therapy, the F.D.A. sought counsel from another advisory committee—this one on blood products—which included physicians, blood-bank officials, and hemophiliacs.

Some on the blood-products committee felt that not enough was known about the virus or how to treat it. Why, then, should people be told? The information could cause profound anxiety and might not be beneficial. Moreover, there was the expense of tracing recipients. Many transfused people die from the medical illness that prompted their need for blood, and the money could be better spent in educating the public about the virus. Other members of the committee—the hemophiliacs in particular—argued vigorously that recipients of tainted blood had the right to know that they might be infected. In the end, the committee failed to reach a consensus. In the early nineties, the American Association of Blood Banks, the umbrella organization that includes the Red Cross and other major providers of blood products, could not reach an agreement, either, and looked to the government for guidance. But without a clear decision from its advisory committee the F.D.A. did not take action. As a result, there was also no effective campaign to educate the public. The consequence? Those who had received transfusions before 1992 were never contacted, and no systematic attempt was made to reach other high-risk groups.

"I'M supposed to have a liver biopsy," Dominique told me. She was concerned about the procedure. "With all the sophisticated tests that I've had already—ultrasounds and enzymes and virus levels—why can't they figure out what is going on in my liver without stabbing me?"



Because, I explained, it was the only way of determining the extent of the damage. Liver enzymes can be perfectly normal, even though the liver itself is being damaged. And measurements of virus in the blood will not necessarily reflect the degree to which the liver is inflamed. The fact that there is no accurate test to show the extent of disease is one more indication of its covert nature. An invasive biopsy was the only way of assessing Dominique's status, and deciding on treatment. If the biopsy showed widespread cirrhosis, the disease was irreversible, and there was little chance of its responding to interferon, the only proven treatment for the virus.

I accompanied Dominique to her biopsy, and stood off to the side as the gastroenterologist wiped the last traces of iodine from her tense abdomen. He then thrust a long thin trocar into an area just below Dominique's lower right ribs, and in a swift single movement passed skin, muscle, and the tight capsule of the liver, and penetrated deep into the pliant organ. In a similarly deft movement, the instrument was withdrawn, a long sliver of meaty tissue held firmly in its bore.

Later that week, I sat beside the pathologist peering into a microscope. Before us were the labyrinthine caverns of the liver. Distorting its fine mosaic of cuboidal cells were sharp bands of early scarring. Voracious white blood cells studded the field, like vultures feeding on carrion; the usually spacious nuclei of the liver cells were condensed and black, like droplets of crude oil. "Chronic active hepatitis, with some necrosis and fibrosis, but no evidence yet of cirrhosis," the pathologist said. The diagnosis meant that Dominique had a chance.

INTERFERON is a naturally occurring protein that was discovered forty-one years ago, and was so named because of its ability to interfere with virus reproduction. It is believed to obstruct the viral machinery while also boosting the immune response against the infectious microbe. In some fifty per cent of patients being treated with interferon, liver enzymes return to normal, and for as many as half of these patients the virus in their blood falls to undetectable levels. But interferon's effect is limited: the responses to treatment are transient, and the vast majority of patients relapse after the drug is stopped. Interferon is also difficult to tolerate in the amounts needed for treatment. It regularly causes flulike symptoms—fever, malaise, anorexia, and muscle aches—or even thyroid dysfunction and arthritis. Many patients become significantly depressed; a few become suicidal. Back in 1991, when our advisory committee to the F.D.A. voted to approve

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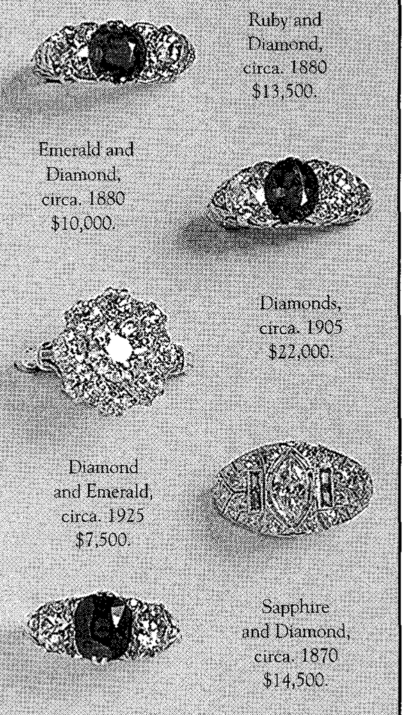

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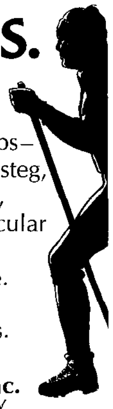

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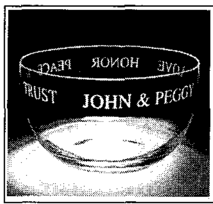

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the drug, we had to acknowledge that there was no evidence that interferon treatment would save lives, but we were aware of the lack of any alternative, and of the desperate need of hepatitis-C patients for relief. The drug could provide a respite from the virus for several months, and might, so we hoped, slow the march to cirrhosis and death. Seven years later, the options for treatment have barely changed.

With the biopsy results in hand, I advised Dominique that she should be treated with interferon. She had probably been carrying the virus for more than a decade, and, with hepatitis C, the longer one lives, the greater the risk for disease. After two decades, up to a third of those infected were predicted to develop cirrhosis. As Dominique enters her forties and fifties, the risk of fatal cirrhosis will probably rise. But with interferon she might be able to slow the infection.

I was cautious about asserting that anyone had actually been cured. The recent data were mostly from Europe, where genetic strains of hepatitis C differ from those in the United States and seem to be more sensitive to interferon. Very recent studies, I continued, suggested that a small number of patients, perhaps five to ten per cent, have shown no evidence of the virus for several years after stopping interferon therapy. There was also a study in which an experimental antiviral agent, ribavirin, was being added to interferon in an attempt to improve the slim rate of potential cures. I told Dominique that this was the clinical trial that I would enter if I were her, and she agreed to participate in it. She said that she was determined to do what she could to combat the virus.

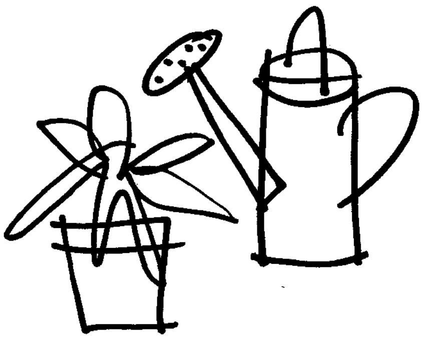
On a Sunday afternoon some four weeks later, I dropped in on Dominique at the bookstore. She was pale, and her movements were slow. She was suffering the side effects of interferon. Although she took the injection, as she had been instructed, at night and with Tylenol (in order to sleep through its immediate toxicity), she told me that her days were marked by migraines, profuse sweating, muscle cramps, and fever. She was unable to exercise; she was losing weight, because she had no appetite; and she was finding it hard to concentrate at work. Her internist had recently given her the antidepressant Zoloft, but it was too soon to tell if it would help.

I tried to be encouraging. Some of the worst side effects waned after a month or two, and her first set of test results suggested that she was responding to the combined treatment.

Over the following weeks, there were several positive signs. The level of hepatitis C in her blood dropped, and her liver enzymes became normal. With each favorable result, the prospect of a cure appeared more possible. And, short of a cure, the hope that she would have a prolonged respite from active infection and that her inflamed liver might recover seemed even more likely.

THE Surgeon General of the United States, Dr. David Satcher, recently testified in Congress that blood banks and hospitals have been instructed to send out letters over the next eighteen months to those most at risk of having received a tainted blood transfusion before 1992. The recipients will be notified that they may been given blood from someone who later tested positive for hepatitis C, and they will be advised to have themselves tested for the virus. Dr. Satcher, who was just appointed Surgeon General this February, has had to overcome resistance to the decision. As in 1991, some still argue that not enough is known about the natural course of the infection to justify the anxiety that these letters will provoke. A number of the intended recipients will have died, some—as happened with Donald Brady—from the virus itself. Hundreds of thousands of letters are supposed to go out. It is believed that most of the recipients will prove to be hepatitis-C carriers.

Dr. Satcher's decision represents an important change in government policy, and indicates how seriously the new Surgeon General views the looming epidemic. He also intends to act on recommendations concerning the need for greater public education and the importance of testing for all groups at risk. Yet it is still unclear how the massive program of tracing recipients and having them tested, counselled, and referred for medical evaluation can be put into effect. No government funds have been appropriated for it.



The majority of people now identified as having hepatitis C are poor, are black or Hispanic, and are in contact with intravenous drugs; their plight has frequently been overlooked by the larger society. But middle- and upper-class Americans who received blood transfusions before 1992 or who flirted with cocaine or unknowingly slept with an infected person may soon learn that they carry the virus. It is unlikely that they will accept the discovery quietly. They will make demands, both of science and of the government. Hepatitis C is already the leading cause for liver transplant in America. Each transplant can cost an average of three hundred thousand dollars. It is estimated that, short of transplant, standard yearly care for a person with advanced cirrhosis or liver cancer costs twenty thousand dollars. Counting loss of productivity, this will add more than six hundred million dollars to health-care costs each year, well into the next millennium.

“I THOUGHT I was so brave, that I was so determined and strong,” Dominique began, her gaze unsteady. “It was all empty bravado.”

She had just returned from seeing the liver specialist, where she learned that after three debilitating months of interferon and ribavirin therapy she had relapsed. Her liver enzymes were elevated again, and the virus in her blood had abruptly raced up to a high level. The data from studies of interferon alone indicate that a patient whose virus breaks through within three months is unlikely to respond to further treatment.

Dominique was asked by the specialist to stay in the research study for the sake of obtaining complete data, but she was also told that, given the persistence and severity of her side effects, it would be understandable if she opted to drop out. She had decided to stop treatment.

We sat for a long while in silence, and agreed that there was only one choice: to wait, and hope that medical science will move more quickly than the course of her infection. ♦

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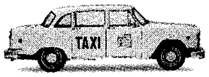
Unfortunately, some kids drink on prom night. So please plan alternate transportation, or your local hospital may do it for them. To help  keep your teen safe, see your Allstate Agent or call 1-888-ALLSFTY. **Being in good hands is the only place to be.**℠

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With "Bulworth," Warren Beatty puts his career on the color line.

BY HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.

WARREN BEATTY can't rap. He's a brilliant actor, a savvy entrepreneur, a talented director, and—that dying breed—a real movie star. But in "Bulworth," which he directed and produced and co-wrote and plays the title role in (he may have been gaffer and best boy, too, for all I know; I didn't stay until the end of the credits), he plays a United States senator who, in the midst of a nervous breakdown, starts speaking in rhythmic rhyme. The result is closer to Dr. Seuss than Dr. Dre.

Mercifully, Beatty doesn't rap off camera. "The great thing about being famous is you can call up anybody," he told me, explaining how he got acquainted with various black illuminati. "I don't go through people. I pick up the phone and say, 'I've got your telephone number. I'm me. Do you know who I am?' Very few people don't know who I am. With Amiri Baraka, I just called him up—same way I got to know Suge Knight. Or Cornel West. I just picked up the phone and said, 'Do you know who I am?' "

We were having oatmeal together at a fancy hotel during one of his recent visits to New York; after a spoonful or two, a very attractive woman came over to our table, prating to him of Public Advocate Mark Green and betraying no awareness of my existence. After she left, Beatty gave me a sorrowing look: my life, and welcome to it, was the general idea. I tried to muster sympathy. Then he went back to what he had been saying about the politics of culture and "what Jimmy Baldwin would have called the 'burden of representation.' " Maybe the guy can't rap, but he certainly can talk, albeit in an oddly sporadic, drifting-away cadence that suggests the cognitive equivalent of call waiting. (At least someone like Baldwin was usually on the other line.)

When executives at Fox saw the script, Beatty says, "I think they thought I should have my head examined."

Beatty said the idea of his doing a movie about race had first arisen during the late sixties, in conversations with Baldwin and Alex Haley, but it's just as well that he didn't get off the mark. "If I had made it back in 1968, when I was working for Bobby Kennedy, it would have been too politically correct for words," he told me. And one thing "Bulworth" isn't is politically correct.

The movie takes place in the waning days of the 1996 primary campaign. Senator Jay Bulworth, Democrat of California, was once an idealist—as the film's opening credits roll, the camera lingers over photographs in his office of Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Thurgood Marshall, and the like—but he's since turned into just another pandering politico, complete with a loveless model-home marriage to a lockjawed Wasp. We're shown a loop of his thirty-second television spots, all touting neocon nostrums: work, not welfare; equal treatment, not affirmative action. And then the man himself, watching the screen and weeping: Senator Bulworth is losing his marbles.

In the depths of despair, Bulworth makes a deal for a ten-million-dollar life-insurance policy (by promising the industry that he'll waylay a bill hostile to its interests), and contracts for a hit on himself. Then, with nothing to lose, he starts saying exactly what he thinks about politics, money, and race. At a campaign stop at a black church in South Central Los Angeles, Bulworth tells the congregation that politicians like him only help people who can give them money. What's more, he says, "If you don't put down that malt liquor and chicken wings and get behind somebody other than a running back who stabs his wife, you're never going to get rid of somebody like me." Moments like this catapult "Bulworth"—a tragic farce, in Beatty's preferred formulation—way beyond the conventions of Hollywood high-mindedness.

But the film isn't just " 'Liar, Liar' Goes to Washington," as becomes clear when Bulworth ends up dancing the night away at an after-hours L.A. hip-hop club. He finds himself spellbound by the beautiful fly girl Nina (Halle Berry), and by hip-hop itself. Thereafter, the increasingly unhinged Senator speaks mostly in hip-hop doggerel. "There's a time when every homey got to risk his neck and fight / For the thing that he believe in, and he got to preach it right," he tells a drug dealer, sounding like a really pissed-off Edgar Guest.

"Is that how white people rap?" one gang-banger marvels to another. It's certainly one question raised by the spectacle—at first astonishing and then a little

ROBERT RISKO

excruciating—of the rappin’ Senator. Aaron Sorkin, a playwright and screenwriter who contributed some of the film’s dialogue, told me, “To be perfectly honest, I never got that part of it. I always worried that it was going to seem as if we were trivializing rap, and that it would look very much like a middle-aged white man’s take on rap.”

I doubt that Beatty, who’s sixty-one, would take issue with that last point. Explaining his decision to plunge ahead with the ticklish subject, he told me, “Look, I finally realized that if I made a film it was going to be from the point of view of what I am: a depressed Kennedy liberal, or whatever I am—and a white man.” A white man, moreover, from a white part of the world. “It’s something about Virginia,” Beatty kept repeating, half to himself, when I asked him about the role of black culture in the movie. Beatty grew up middle-class in Arlington, “in an atmosphere where not only were there no black people but a Catholic was exotic.” As the sixties gained steam, however, Beatty became close to many blacks who were active in the struggle for civil rights, and the era was clearly central to his political development. (Pictures we see of the young Bulworth with Bobby Kennedy are actual pictures of the young Warren Beatty with Bobby Kennedy.)

Something about Virginia: Beatty told me that when he was growing up there he had an aunt who took leave of her senses and started talking in lyrics from Oscar Hammerstein and Cole Porter. That’s not to say he thinks rap is the register of dementia. On the contrary, he seems to view it as a uniquely vibrant, truth-telling medium, and defends it from critics who attack it as misogynistic. “I say, Listen! There is something happening in the family in the inner city. When the father does not have a job and is ashamed and leaves, and things are turned over to the mother, there is something about that mother that is going to be oppressive.” So the misogyny in hip-hop culture, as he sees it, is ultimately grounded in the anger of fatherless boys raised by husbandless women. (This hypothesis does not command universal acceptance, as I learned when I proposed it to one rap artist of my acquaintance. Betraying a measure of skepticism, the man inquired, “He outta his motherfuckin’ mind?”) In Beatty’s view, “the same people who are objecting to rap music now would in the sixties have been objecting to Huey Newton or Bobby Seale or Eldridge Cleaver or Stokely Carmichael.”

Is hip-hop an agent of social change? Is Suge Knight, the jailed gangsta-rap impresario, our Malcolm X? One thing that hip-hop militants share with their sixties precursors is a disdain for what they see as the sanctioned civil-rights establishment. In Willie D’s impassioned rap number “Rodney K.,” there’s a moment of caustic satire when we hear a voice solemnly announce, “Time for the Negro National Anthem,” followed by an off-key rendition of “We Shall Overcome.” Willie D breaks in with the rap: “Fuck all that singin’ / I’ma be too busy swingin’ ”—his fists, that is. And firing bullets: “Right between the eyes / So you can keep your motherfuckin’ Nobel Peace Prize.” There’s a lesson here for white folks who think black rage looks like Kweisi Mfume. “Anybody who doesn’t deal with rap, including gangsta rap, with the utmost respect and attention ought to wake up and smell the coffee,” Beatty said, his eyes flashing.

So the star isn’t just slumming. Quite the contrary. The embrace of black America in the film is more than metaphorical. “One thing the movie suggests is that the only way for us to overcome on this debilitating racial thing is simply—forgive the crudeness of language—for everybody to fuck everybody else,” Aaron Sorkin says. “Warren spent many, many hours trying to convince me that that’s what was actually happening, even showing me census data about it.”

But the truly vital amalgamation is a spiritual one. In “Bulworth,” the sellout Senator reclaims his soul—and his will to live—through an immersion in the putative authenticity of urban black culture. In embracing hip-hop, Beatty assured me, he means “no disrespect to my inhibited Wasp roots.” Yet this redemptive vision of black culture has deep roots of its own. “We are the first fruits of this new nation, the harbinger of that black tomorrow which is yet destined to soften the whiteness of the Teutonic today,” W. E. B. Du Bois wrote in 1897. “We are that people whose subtle sense of song has given America its only American music, its only American fairy tales, its only touch of pathos and humor amid its mad money-getting plutocracy.”

I asked Beatty if he believed some-

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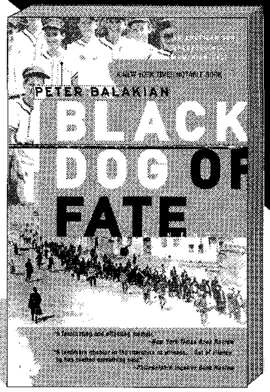
“The old country. That phrase comes up now and then....I knew it meant Armenia, but it would make me uneasy. If I asked about the old country, the adults would change the subject....Where had it gone?”
—from *Black Dog of Fate*



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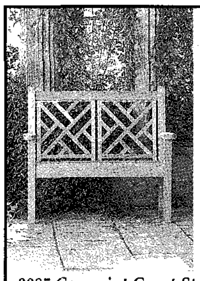

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thing like this—if he believed that, perhaps as a result of a history of oppression, blacks really are particularly soulful and authentic. "The answer to that would seem to be in the affirmative," he said warily. "But it would be ridiculous to say that it is." Senator Bulworth in his prime couldn't have given a more politic response.

A BUSLOAD of black kids are settling in for a special "Bulworth" screening, having been procured for the occasion by the publicist of a hip-hop record label. The plan may be to spark word of mouth in the black community, but also to provide a more suggestive setting for the other members of the audience, by way of a live laugh track. Beatty has made his way to the front of the screening room, and is about to say a few words about the film. In the second row, there's a hushed argument between two b-boys, one of whom is pawing the other's North Face jacket to emphasize his point: "I'm telling you, that guy there, he's—he's, like, a famous actor."

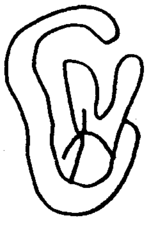
At one point in "Bulworth," Beatty's character, ambling through the unaccustomed environs of South Central Los Angeles, is mistaken for George Hamilton. Both actors have in the past enjoyed a certain following among black Americans, as figures of mack-daddy urbanity. But even those blacks in the theatres who will bristle at the sight of Warren Beatty getting down with Halle Berry are bound to respond to his more thoughtful outrages.

Amid the weirdness of Warren Beatty the rapper, let alone the wattage of Warren Beatty the movie star, it's easy to lose sight of what makes the film a real departure: the fact that it has bona-fide political content. There are Hollywood films about politics and there are Hollywood films about love affairs, but the former are hardly more likely to have actual political content than the latter are to depict actual sexual penetration. Instead, both genres have evolved elaborate cinematic vocabularies of indirection. "If you go back and analyze the old Capra movies, or other movies that were called 'political' because they had characters who played politicians, there's not a lot of dialectics going on," Beatty pointed out. "You were not going to lose half your audience by being so silly as to say whether you were a Democrat or a Republican." In more recent years, a "liberal" movie might allow its protagonist to favor day care or (going out on a limb) gun control. A "conservative" movie might let its hero forthrightly oppose terrorism. That's about it. As the spin doctors say, "If you want to win the uncommitted, you got to stay uncommitted."

Beatty, however, goes all the way. When Bulworth, in full hip-hop attire, appears on television, he touts the public financing of elections, blasts the insurance industry for inflating health-care costs, and—attention Rupert Murdoch!—denounces the corrupting influence of corporate-owned networks. (The airwaves, he raps, would "be worth seventy billion to the public today / If a money-grubbin' Congress didn't give 'em away.") By Hollywood standards, that makes "Bulworth" downright pornographic.

The film's major black characters, too, are expert in what Amiri Baraka, who plays a vagrant soothsayer in the film, likes to call "ghetto-ology." In the venerable tradition of "Superfly," LD (Don Cheadle), the film's crack-peddling gang-banger, turns out to be an articulate social critic. "You greedy-ass politicians" send a message to inner-city youths "every time that y'all vote to cut them school programs, every time y'all vote to cut them funds to the job programs," he tells the Senator. "Bulworth" sometimes plays as if Beatty had optioned the film rights to a month's worth of editorials in *The Nation*.

Indeed, Beatty said that when executives at Fox, which is distributing the film, saw the script, "I think they thought I should have my head examined." But by then there was little else for them to do but grin and bear it. The "backstory"—as they say at story conferences—is that Fox had originally agreed to make "Dick Tracy" with him but backed out of the deal. (The film was made with Disney.) By way of an informal settlement, Fox agreed to give Beatty a thirty-million-dollar budget and complete control over his next film. "I told Fox, 'I have an action against you, and it would be better for us both if I didn't pursue it,'" Beatty explained. "Without these odd circumstances, I don't think the film would have been financed."



If "Bulworth" was made in jut-jawed defiance of the marketplace, though, at some point in postproduction Beatty decided to put himself back in the running. So this

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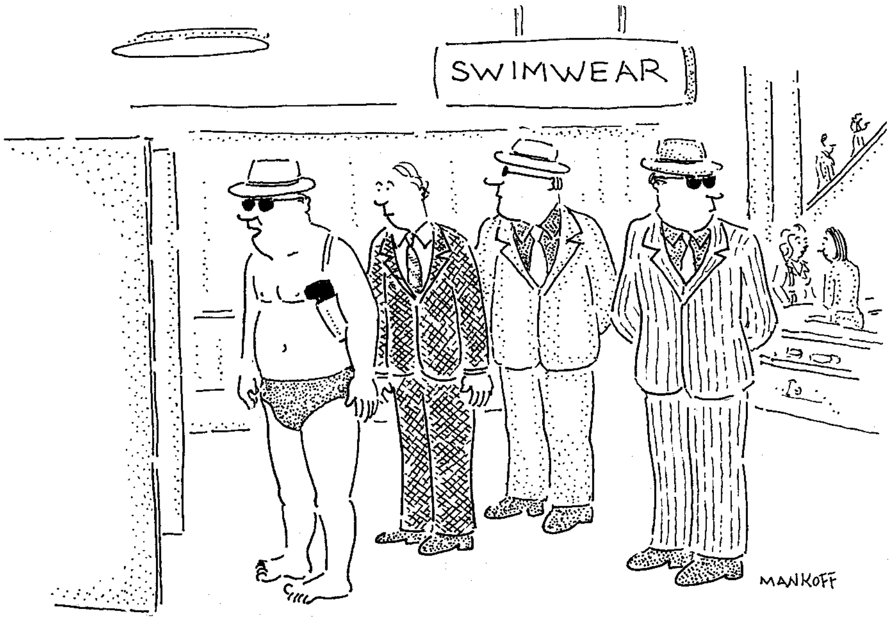

"You sure this is bulletproof?"

• •

rather reclusive fellow has, contrary to his custom, actually been doing a fair amount of pre-publicity. "You just never know in movies or in politics when a good idea might catch on," he told me. Remember, the guy did stump for George McGovern.

THE more you talk to Beatty, in fact, the more you start to wonder: Is "Bulworth" a Hollywood film about politics or a political film about Hollywood? Politicians who pander are, in his words, "selling tickets," and his disenchantment with the Democratic Party mirrors his disenchantment with Hollywood. In both cases, he decries "an age of technological innovation that allows such a sophisticated knowledge of the demographics that it's become necessary for a politician to follow rather than lead—which is exactly what has happened to the movies."

It's in these terms that Beatty castigates President Clinton, whom he first encountered in 1972, when Clinton was helping to run the Texas campaign for McGovern. "I don't know how to justify it," Beatty told me. "When you have been reëlected and you don't have to sell any more tickets, why don't you lead to where one would assume your heart is?"

I asked Beatty if he thought the President would enjoy the film. "I don't know—his capacity for denial seems to be stupendous," he said, sighing. "Maybe when you sell all those tickets, you begin to have more respect for the big action special-effects movie. You see the taxicab that's thrown in the air and plops down into the middle of Seventy-sixth and Madison and you say, 'Hey, not bad!' 'What about that dialogue we had?' 'Well, we don't need that. Can we get another cab over here—maybe smack it through the window of the drugstore over there?'" It was such a splendid riff I had to remind myself that Beatty wasn't talking about Joel Silver's last blockbuster: he was analyzing Bill Clinton's second term and the wretchedness of a politician for whom the pursuit of popularity has become an end in itself. Welfare reform—*boom!* Just another special effect.

Beatty recalls another, better time: "What we call the golden era of American film, from the late sixties to the late seventies, was a wonderful period in movies and politics. It was a period when you didn't know that you would lose, in the box office and in the voting booth, if you did the right thing. Now you know—you will lose."

All the same, there's something irresistible about the scenario: the vaguely extortionary deal with a corporation that has no idea what it's letting itself in for; the public figure who, bitterly disaffected by the times he lives in, decides to jeopardize a carefully tended reputation and risk everything; the man's final, awkwardly timed change of heart. It could almost be the plot of a movie. ♦

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THE WORLD OF BUSINESS

BRONFMAN'S BIG DEALS

The business behind the rumors about Edgar Bronfman, Jr.,'s Universal.

BY CONNIE BRUCK

EDGAR BRONFMAN, JR.,'S odyssey in the world of entertainment, which began in earnest three years ago, has been wild even by the standards of a volatile industry. Certainly, his inexperience made it more difficult. When he took control of MCA, Inc., now renamed Universal Studios, he was regarded as a rich dilettante with a fan's enthusiasm for Hollywood, whose only prior experience there had been as a sometime songwriter and movie producer. Hollywood, historically, has not been kind to neophytes with power, and Bronfman's exploits—questionable hires and dubious deals and wholesale corporate reëngineering—were much commented on in that community. In the past several weeks, following a round of firings at Universal, these criticisms spilled into the press, and a number of articles attempted to analyze instability at the company. Rumors fed stories, and stories stoked rumors, until Bronfman seemed caught in a nasty vortex. Some articles speculated that he might be seeking a way to cash out of the entertainment business altogether. But one of Bronfman's advisers told me, "He would not do that—it would be an admission of failure." His instinct, rather, seems to be to dig in deeper, and to prove to his family and to the world that he can do it after all.

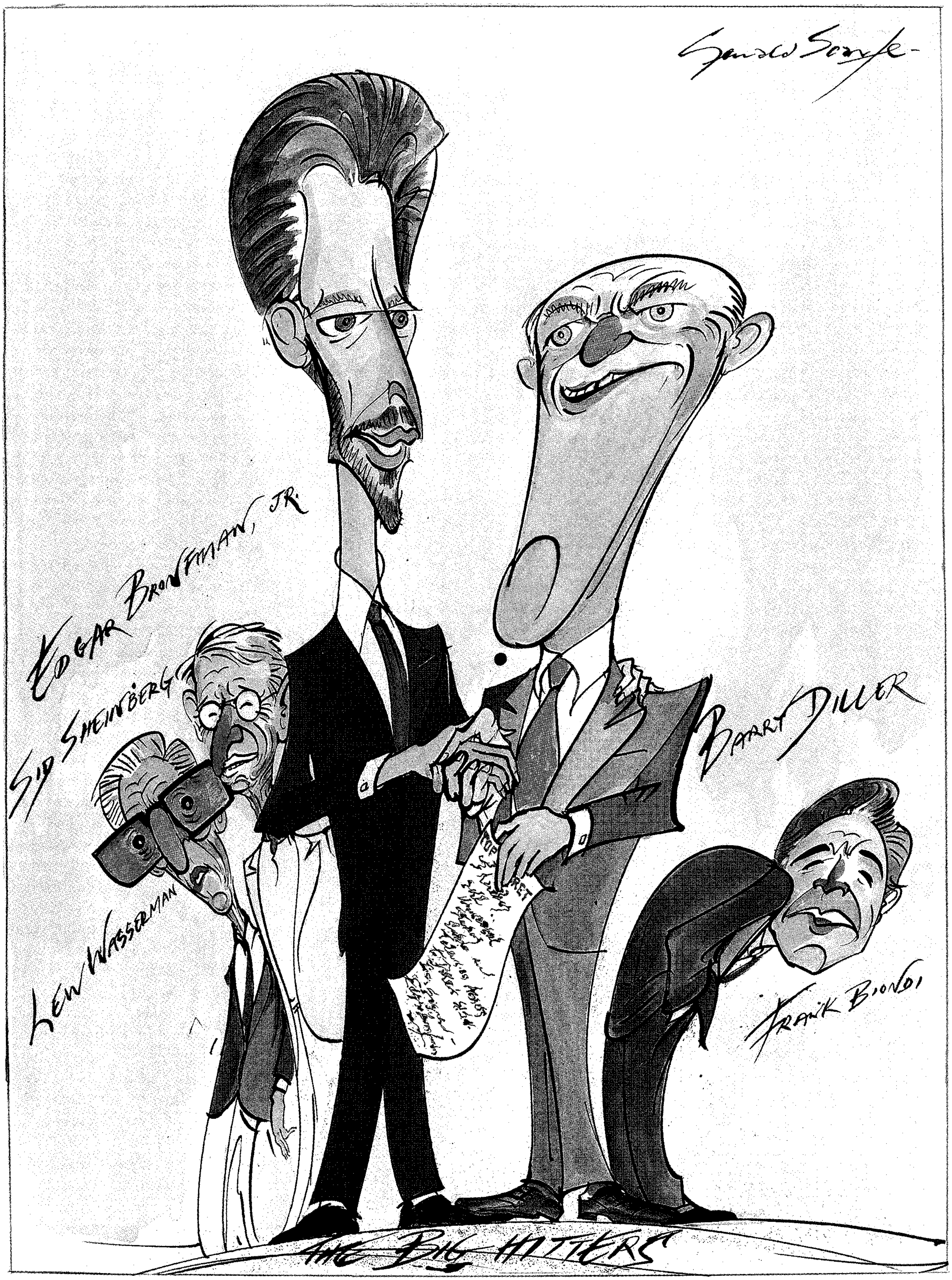
So it was not surprising, at this moment of crisis, to hear that Seagram, the Bronfman family's company, which owns most of Universal, may finally be close to a deal to acquire the British music company EMI. Edgar, Jr., as he is known, is said to have dreamed of this from the start. Music is his personal passion (he still writes song lyrics, under the name Sam Roman), and when the Bronfmans were in the process of acquiring MCA, in the spring of 1995, they thought of music as the platform from which a reconfigured company would be launched. One person who discussed the subject with Edgar, Jr., told me that he explained his thinking this way: "We'll never be No. 1 in publishing. . . . We'll never be No. 1 in TV. . . . We'll never be No. 1 in theme parks. . . . Only in music can we be No. 1." If Universal could acquire EMI, it would be the biggest music company in the world. The problem was price; a couple of years ago, EMI was said to be asking about ten billion dollars. According to this person, Bronfman has been in sporadic negotiations with EMI since 1995. "He told us how he took a hundred-year-old bottle of Martell cognac to Sir Colin Southgate"—the chairman of EMI—"who's an epicure," this person told me. "One scheme was to buy half of EMI and later buy the other half. Southgate didn't want to do it."

Recently, however, EMI, engulfed by management turmoil of its own, announced that it is engaged in talks with a potential buyer. And bad press has surely quickened Bronfman's desire for the bold stroke that will set his company on the right course. To an extent, this has been a pattern in his career: faced with a crisis or a challenge, Bronfman reaches for a high-profile deal as a remedy. He did this most recently—and most boldly—in the sale he made to Barry Diller. Announced in October, 1997, it was a startling and unprecedented transaction: Universal sold most of its cable and domestic-television assets, including the USA cable network, to Diller's HSN, Inc., which would be renamed USA Networks; the deal gave Universal a stake in the company—and the possibility of regaining control of its assets in the future, though Diller has said that that day may be thirty years away.

Bronfman probably expected accolades for this deal, but it was widely disparaged in Hollywood. In dismantling his TV division, he had committed a profoundly countercultural act. One studio head explained the situation by saying, "It is not pure happenstance that all majors are in both the motion-picture and the TV-production businesses. There is a reason. It has evolved over the past fifty years. After all, TV and motion pictures are similar creative processes, at heart, and the distribution is intermeshed." On a more human level, others found it almost indefensible that Bronfman had not told Frank Biondi, Universal's chairman and C.E.O., about the deal until after Bronfman and Diller shook hands on it. But perhaps Bronfman's worst sin, in the eyes of Hollywood, was that he had been bested in a deal. It was, moreover, not the first time that Bronfman, the cocky outsider, was thought to have been had. One Hollywood hand declared, "The taking of Edgar is now a cottage industry."

I recently had a series of interviews with Bronfman in the famous MCA black tower, in Hollywood—a glass-sided monolith, from which Bronfman has banished the English antiques installed by MCA's founder, Jules Stein, in favor of a muted, California-contemporary ambience. At forty-two, Bronfman is tall, lean, and slightly feral-looking, with a van Gogh beard; he is often dressed in jeans and his signature Armani jacket. He speaks in softly modulated tones, and has a studiously gracious manner. Especially upon a first encounter, people are often charmed to find that someone born to such wealth seems so deferential and so easily given to self-deprecating humor. When I met with him, however, Bronfman seemed edgy, defensive, and bitter, his veneer of graciousness worn thin. He insisted that his deal with Diller had been brilliant ("It breaks the paradigm, it's out of the box, it's innovative, no one's ever done it before") and a uniquely personal kind of achievement. "The only two people who could have done a deal like this were Barry and me—because of our relationship," he said, which "in-

GERALD SCARFE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volves a level of trust that is profound."

Bronfman pointed out that some on Wall Street think the deal was smart, but he acknowledged that "Hollywood thinks it was dumb."

Why was that?

"It's a dumb town," he declared.

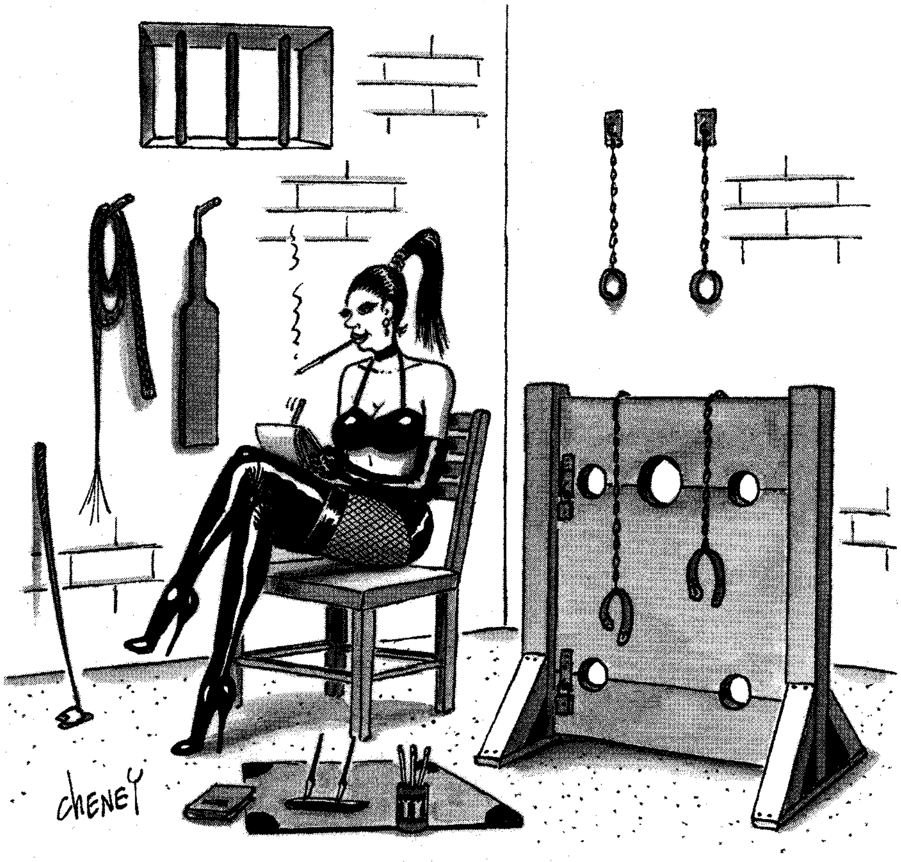
Though Bronfman was a novice when he arrived at MCA, three years ago, from the start he displayed a near-scorn for much of what existed there, clearly believing that he could improve it. He seemed to feel that belittling his predecessors made him bigger, and this tendency fuelled antagonism toward him. Now Bronfman returned again and again to this theme, claiming that Universal had done quite well on his watch, considering that "we took over a truly broken company."

MCA, of course, was built by Lew Wasserman and run by him for decades. An exemplar of business acumen, political sophistication, and indomitable drive, he did more to shape the entertainment industry in those years than any other individual. By the eighties, Sidney Sheinberg, MCA's president and chief operating officer, was in effect running the company in partnership with Wasserman, and they made a formidable pair—both admired and feared for being smart, tough, and tightfisted.

In late 1990, Wasserman and Sheinberg agreed to sell the company to the Matsushita Electric Industrial Company, in large part because they believed that MCA needed greater financial clout to compete with global behemoths like the then newly formed Time Warner. The sale also seemed like a way for the aging executives (who were to stay on as managers) to cash out while preserving the MCA legacy. But things didn't work that way. Instead of invigorating MCA, the sale left the company on the sidelines, because Matsushita, soon plagued by internal financial problems and a sagging economy, vetoed Wasserman's and Sheinberg's proposals for expansion.

I asked Bronfman whether it was during the Matsushita years that the company had fallen into this "broken" state.

That period is "used as a convenient excuse," Bronfman responded smoothly. "I don't think the Matsushita ownership materially affected what was a company in long-term decline. I think Lew fifteen years ago took the position that these businesses were not going to grow, so he was going to manage risk." He added, pointedly, "One is an investor's perspective, one is a business-leadership perspective. You can't grow a company where managing risk is your first, second, and third priority."



"Dear Mom and Dad: Just a quick note to thank you for the very lovely desk set."

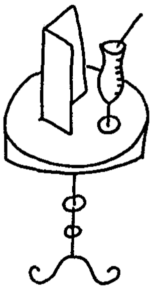
BRONFMAN is a member of the third generation of a Canadian family that made its fortune in the liquor business in the nineteen-twenties and thirties and then, in the sixties, expanded into oil and chemicals. He was drawn to show business as a teen-ager and tried his hand at scriptwriting and songwriting instead of going to college. In his teens and into his twenties, he produced a couple of films and plays, but when his father invited him to join the family business, in 1982, he did. Edgar, Jr., told me that it was when his father promoted him to president and formally anointed him to be his successor as chairman, in 1989, that he decided he wanted to move Seagram into entertainment. Between February, 1993, and April, 1994, Seagram bought a fifteen-per-cent stake in Time Warner (and sold a substantial part of it at an early stage in the recent run-up in Time Warner stock). In early 1995, Edgar, Jr., made the now notorious decision for Seagram to sell a 24.2-per-cent stake in DuPont and then used the proceeds to buy MCA. His uncle Charles Bronfman, who is the co-chairman of Seagram, had deep reservations about this move, but Edgar, Sr., supported his son. Charles, unwilling to start a family war, reluctantly went along. Since then, Charles's reservations appear to have been vindicated. Seagram's stock performance in this enduring bull market has lagged—its shares have stumbled a number of times, and are now worth some fifty per cent more than they were before the MCA deal—while DuPont shares have more than doubled, causing some investors to hold the Bronfmans responsible for passing up more than nine billion dollars in DuPont-related gains.

Although Seagram is a public company, the Bronfmans control roughly thirty-five per cent of the stock, and, especially in recent years, its course appears to have been determined by family dynamics. Edgar, Sr., sounds more like an indulgent patriarch than like a corporate fiduciary when he defends his son's decisions. "The whiskey business is not a growth business, and you can't ask a forty-year-old chief executive to run a stagnant company," he told me. "We could have taken over DuPont," he mused aloud, explaining that the standstill agreement Seagram had signed was set to expire in 1999. "But what fun would it have been to go to Wilmington, Delaware, and run that business?" DuPont, he said, was "a boring company."

Edgar, Jr.,'s role model in the entertainment business is the late Steve Ross—that quintessentially larger-than-life entrepreneur who started his career managing funeral homes and parking lots and became co-C.E.O. of the world's largest media-entertainment company, Time Warner. Ross was handsome, charismatic, and irresistibly charming to many whom he courted. And he was gifted—in his intuition about people, in his facility with numbers, and in his ability to cut deals so deftly that the other side often left the negotiating table blissfully unaware of having been taken. Bronfman has a trace of Ross's physical presence. (In Edgar, Sr.,'s recent autobiography, "Good Spirits," he describes his second-eldest son as "blond and very handsome, with a straight Roman nose," and adds that "his stride is purposeful, his manner that of both a leader and a lady-killer.") It seemed that Edgar, Jr., might share some of Ross's deal-making talents as well. Certainly his purchase of MCA followed the Ross script: in 1995, Bronfman travelled to Japan alone and, on the basis of two personal encounters, reached a deal on favorable terms.

One of his advisers in this clandestine operation was Michael Ovitz, who was then the head of the Creative Artists Agency, or C.A.A., Hollywood's dominant talent agency. For years, Ovitz had been fascinated with MCA and eager to ascend from agent to business leader, as Lew Wasserman had done. It was Ovitz who, in 1990, first brought his client, Matsushita, together with MCA. Now Ovitz was once more brokering the sale of MCA, but covertly. Wasserman and Sheinberg held Ovitz partly responsible for their disastrous marriage to Matsushita, and would almost surely have opposed any new scheme of his by bringing in a third party to bid.

In fact, it was critical to Seagram's plan that the company reach agreement with Matsushita before an auction could take place, driving up the price. Someone involved in this transaction told me that Matsushita clearly could have got more money for MCA, but the Japanese owners had been so traumatized by their public battles with Wasserman and Sheinberg that they wanted a quiet, decorous way out. Thus it was decided that Bronfman would go to Osaka, to meet with the Matsushita president, Yoichi Morishita, and that he would go alone, armed only with his "winning personality," an adviser says. Bronfman and Morishita had to speak through an interpreter, and Bronfman did not even have an assistant to take notes ("Alone was alone," he told me), but after about four weeks and one more secret trip to Osaka a deal was reached, because, Bronfman explained, "I believed he was honest, he believed I was honest." About the purchase price, of $5.7 million for more than eighty per cent of MCA (Matsushita kept almost twenty per cent), Bronfman remarked with a smile that seemed to belie his words, "We didn't steal the company, but we certainly succeeded in buying it below auction value."



At the time, Ovitz did not publicly acknowledge advising Bronfman on this purchase. Even Edgar, Sr., was not fully aware of Ovitz's role. He told me that at the meeting to close the deal he was surprised to see Ovitz take a seat on Seagram's side of the table rather than on Matsushita's side, since Ovitz had been a consultant to Matsushita at the time of its acquisition of MCA. Edgar, Sr., said he had asked Ovitz why he had so placed himself, and Ovitz had responded, "Come on, Edgar, you *know.*" Despite the secrecy, Wasserman and Sheinberg also figured out what Ovitz had done, and they were outraged at what they felt was his betrayal. Sheinberg berated the Bronfmans for going behind their backs. Wasserman chose the dignity of the high road, accepting the Bronfmans' invitation to join the Seagram board, but when he learned that the Bronfmans were negotiating with Ovitz to make him the new C.E.O. of MCA he called Edgar, Sr., and threatened to resign.

The negotiations between Ovitz and Edgar, Jr., became so protracted that they eventually leaked to the press. Ovitz was pushing for a compensation package that could have been one of the largest in American corporate history—roughly two hundred and forty million dollars. One of Edgar, Jr.,'s advisers told me he had warned Edgar that when the size of the deal became known he "would look like a fool." However, Edgar, Jr.—perhaps recalling Steve Ross's central tenet, which was to find the right people and pay them so well that it would be impossible to lure them away—still wanted Ovitz. It was his uncle Charles, finally, who told him that Ovitz's price could not be met. In early June, 1995, at a meeting of MCA senior executives the day after these negotiations broke down, one executive recalls Bronfman saying, "Frankly, Ovitz was Plan A. I don't have a Plan B."

HAVING paid almost six billion dollars to get into the entertainment business, Seagram suddenly had no experienced guide to the new territory. Seagram stock was plummeting on the news that the company had no one to lead MCA, so Bronfman placed an urgent call to David Geffen, who, with Steven Spielberg and the former Disney chief Jeffrey Katzenberg, had formed DreamWorks. Spielberg had been the engine of the MCA movie division for many years, and Bronfman hoped that if he could finalize a series of distribution deals with DreamWorks it would shore up the stock. MCA and DreamWorks had been negotiating for months without being able to come to terms. Now Bronfman and Geffen, each accompanied by one lieutenant, met at Geffen's Malibu beach house. One person familiar with the situation says that Edgar, Jr., said to Geffen, "You're a fair person. You tell me what you think is fair and I'll do it," and that the deal was closed in half an hour.

What broke the impasse between DreamWorks and Universal was Bronfman's eagerness and Geffen's quick response to it. As one associate of Geffen's recounted the episode, "Edgar said, 'I want it,' and David said, 'I'll be fair.' But he negotiated a great deal." According to several former MCA executives, DreamWorks was so aggressive in the deal that Universal was unlikely to make much of a profit and might not even recoup its costs. Also, in part to mollify Spielberg, Universal offered a generous production deal to Sheinberg, which reportedly cost the company a hundred and thirty million dollars when such movies as "McHale's Navy" and "For Richer or Poorer" bombed.

WITH Ovitz gone, Bronfman needed someone else, and he began relying more heavily on Geffen. One former MCA executive says that Bronfman remarked to him, "I consider David Geffen my guardian angel." Geffen, the consummate Hollywood power broker, always seems to be pursuing multiple personal agendas with a combination of tirelessness and intensity that bests most adversaries. In Hollywood, he has been described in many flattering ways by those who like him and those who fear him, but "guardian angel" is surely a first.

In early 1996, Bronfman asked Geffen to negotiate Universal's purchase of one-half of Interscope, the record company started by Ted Field and Jimmy Iovine, which had flourished by backing the gangsta-rap label Death Row. Some in Hollywood found it curious: Geffen was not an investment banker or a lawyer, who could be relied upon to be clear of interests other than his client's, and he had no official role at Universal. He was also a close friend of Iovine's. But Bronfman defended the choice, which seemed to slight his own executives, by saying, "If you were buying a music company, who would you rather have negotiate it than David Geffen?" From a business standpoint, Interscope was a smart buy; the label was responsible for a substantial part of the threefold increase in the profits of Universal music last year, although it has been less strong in the past few months. But it was also a questionable way to build up the division. Some established music executives had turned down a Death Row venture because of the risk of association with gangsters that they believed it posed. (Death Row's impresario, Suge Knight, is now in jail.) Moreover, Time Warner had sold its share in the label because it had been publicly attacked by groups outraged about gangsta-rap lyrics. But Bronfman worked hard to persuade a queasy Seagram board to approve the purchase.

It was Geffen, too, who recommended his old buddy Ron Meyer, Ovitz's second-in-command at C.A.A.,

AMERICAN NOTES

BOBBY'S TRAGIC MUSE

SHORTLY after Robert F. Kennedy died, thirty years ago this June, his friend Robert Lowell described him as a character "out of Plutarch." For a poet to compare an American politician to one of Plutarch's subjects might seem a stretch, but what Lowell had in mind was Bobby's preoccupation with tragedy—the doom woven into his nerves.

To be sure, the air of tragic inevitability that hangs over Bobby's final days is probably the product of hindsight, of our desire to make momentous events conform to a heroic pattern. There was no necessary reason for Bobby's frenetic campaign in the 1968 California primary—a blur of sun-drenched motorcades and ecstatic crowds—to culminate in a pistol shot in the pantry of the Ambassador Hotel. Bobby was not Cato, harried by Caesar to a predictably tragic end; and Sirhan Sirhan, the deluded kid who'd watched too much TV in a Los Angeles suburb, was not the ideal architect of a Roman-style martyrdom.

But Lowell's insight remains a valid one. After J.F.K.'s assassination, Bobby became a devoted reader of the Greek tragic poets. He attempted to comfort an Indianapolis crowd on the day Martin Luther King, Jr., was murdered, by quoting Aeschylus—from memory. He was not showing off; he had simply come to the conclusion that the tragic point of view made more sense than any other. For a man as sensitive to suffering as Bobby was, the "Agamemnon" was a guide to life.

Bobby's tragic sensibility is not the only perspective from which to view the man; it does not explain all the mysteries of his character. It cannot explain how the man who once served as an aide to Joseph McCarthy ended up becoming a senator who praised Che Guevara as a "revolutionary hero." It cannot explain why the man who denounced America's cult of the G.N.P. should have been fascinated by the power of capital—and advocated using the tax code to stimulate private investment in the ghetto, years before that idea became fashionable. Perhaps the essential clue to this most protean of modern politicians is that Bobby was perpetually in a state of *becoming*. The pious altar boy who went to Milton Academy and Harvard became a corruption-busting reformer in the tradition of Teddy Roosevelt and Henry Stimson; his investigations of labor racketeering in the fifties were models of virtuous patrician policework. A decade later, he flirted with radicalism, hung out with Tom Hayden, and listened to Jefferson Airplane. (On weekends, he and Ethel continued to throw lavish parties at Hickory Hill for the Averell Harrimans and Joseph Alsops of the world.) Near the end of his life, he was pushing neo-Emersonian ideas about the need for self-reliance in the inner cities.

A generation ago—when footage of burning Vietnamese villages and burning American cities appeared regularly on television—a rhetoric that emphasized the tragic quality of life seemed spookily appropriate. And yet Bobby was almost alone among American statesmen in putting the country's problems in a tragic light, in insisting that its problems were rooted in the imperfections of human character and could not be solved by another Great Society program, another Vietnam commitment. Although to some conservatives he remains an icon of radical chic, Bobby was in many ways at odds with the spirit of his age. Our efforts, he said, "will come to little if they do not succeed in restoring importance to the lives of individual men."

As the attempt to "end welfare as we know it" continues, Bobby's use of older moral vocabularies—the tragic notions of the Greeks, Emerson's ideas about character-building—appears almost prophetic. His belief that Americans must look to their nation's "shaping traditions" for a way out may well be more timely than it was three decades ago. His complexity will always fascinate, but it was his attempt to persuade Americans—the most sanguine of peoples—to confront the terror of life that explains why he still has so much to say to us. —MICHAEL KNOX BERAN

BILL EPPRIDGE/LIFE MAGAZINE © TIME INC.

Bobby with his son Max in 1966: In many ways he was at odds with the spirit of his age.

EMERGENCY
WAITING AREA

"I already know he's gone—it's been on the Internet."

• •

to head MCA while the search for a C.E.O. continued. Meyer, a high-school dropout and former marine, who started C.A.A. with Ovitz—and had provided an affable counterbalance to Ovitz's steely demeanor—became MCA's president and chief operating officer in August, 1995. Even Meyer's friends—and they are legion in the Hollywood community—rolled their eyes at his ascension. Meyer himself told me, "I know these people looked at me like Cinderella's stepsisters looked at her."

Meyer soon brought in a longtime friend and consigliere, the entertainment lawyer Howard Weitzman. Weitzman, for his part, brought in a former law partner, Karen Randall, to replace the general counsel, Robert Hadl. Then Meyer hired another C.A.A. agent, Sanford Climan, who, as a Harvard M.B.A., had provided Ovitz with business expertise in corporate transactions. And Edgar, Jr., selected Bruce Hack, from Seagram in New York, as MCA's chief financial officer. In this new group, there was a marked preponderance of people who had either no experience in managing a giant corporation or no experience in running any facet of the entertainment business. But, whatever Bronfman and his new team lacked in experience, they made up for in conviction—and contempt for the past. A former MCA executive recalls entering Bruce Hack's office, unannounced, and overhearing Hack on the phone to someone in the Seagram office in New York. Wasserman did not believe in formal organization charts, because he believed that the scope of the duties of his smart, seasoned executives should not be constricted, and now this man heard Hack saying, "They don't even have a corporate chart—can you believe it? They are brain-dead out here, just brain-dead!"

HISTORICALLY, MCA was a tough, conservative, bottom-line shop. For decades, the unwritten dress code had been white shirts, dark suits, dark ties. (In the eighties, standards slipped, and blue shirts were more common.) Sheinberg was notorious for berating executives in front of their peers, and quarterly meetings came to be referred to as "quarterly beatings." He was a demanding, hands-on manager, who insisted on detailed reports from his department heads and trained a cadre of savvy, thick-skinned executives.

To these people, the experience of reporting to the new Seagram management seemed strange indeed. A former MCA executive told me, "Strong people, raised by Lew and Sid to speak their mind . . . when asked to do silly things, had a tendency to say, 'Are you out of your mind?'" But if the business acumen they had been accustomed to was missing, the "people skills," for which Meyer had become famous as an agent, were much in evidence. He was outgoing, warm, back-slapping, and his constant refrain was "Let me know what I can do to help you."

Meyer professed great respect for Wasserman and Sheinberg. "Thirty-three years ago, I used to come here as a messenger and look in the commissary and watch those guys eat!" he told me when I spoke with him recently. "To me, they were the last of the Hollywood moguls." His style, he made plain, was different. (When I met with him, Meyer was wearing a flannel shirt, with the shirttails out, over jeans.) Bronfman's team instituted casual Fridays and town meetings, where employees from around the world, linked by satellite, could question their managers.

I asked Meyer how he saw his role as president and C.O.O. "I'd rather be part of a well-synchronized team than a group of all-stars," he said. "I believe in synergy and teamwork, as corny as it sounds. It's a culture change. We've broken down walls to encourage creativity across all of our businesses." The new management claims credit for improved health benefits at Universal, a Christmas party, and even better food in the commissary (in particular, good coffee).

Ultimately, almost all the top-level executives of MCA were fired or resigned in a preëmptive strike. Bronfman told me, with apparent pride, "There's almost nobody here in top management who was here before." A former MCA executive says, "It was their agenda to replace not only the creative people—that usually happens—but the infrastructure, the institutional memory of the company: legal, pension, human relations, accounting. . . . They felt everyone had to go, because everyone was tainted with this disease. The disease was the way Lew did it." These days, Sheinberg is wont to refer to the changes at Universal as "ethnic cleansing."

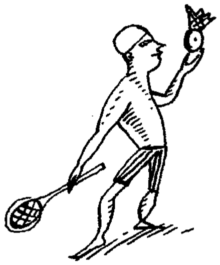
As part of the overhaul, Seagram brought in an army of corporate reëngineering consultants from Booz Allen and Price Waterhouse, and they labored for more than two years, at a cost in excess of seventy-five million dollars. (Universal claims that it will save a hundred and fifty million dollars as a result of their innovations, such as centralized purchasing.) Bronfman also increased the bonus pool and pegged executive compensation to performance—something Wasserman did not believe in. Meanwhile, Meyer has spent millions to change Universal's stern public face into a smiling one. He has extended lavish deals to many producers, directors, and actors, in an attempt to create the kind of warm, generous, talent-friendly place for which Steve Ross established the prototype. "As a young agent, I found this a very intimidating environment," Meyer said. Brian Grazer, who with Ron Howard runs Imagine Entertainment, Universal's major movie supplier, and who has worked with both regimes, seconds Meyer's view. "Under Sid and Tom"—that is, Sheinberg and Pollock—"the culture was about fear. You'd want to be successful because you feared them so much," Grazer said. "One wants to succeed for Edgar and Ron Meyer because they give you love."

To Bronfman, Meyer, and their colleagues, the very architecture of the Universal lot embodies all that was wrong with the old MCA culture—uncaring, rigid, fearsome—and the black tower is its ultimate symbol. When Bronfman decided, shortly after buying the company, to change its name to Universal, he ordered the "MCA" that had been engraved on the elevator floorplates expunged. Apparently eager to erect his own landmark—much as his grandfather Sam Bronfman had had Ludwig Mies van der Rohe design the Seagram Building in New York City—Bronfman chose the Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas to design Universal's new corporate headquarters as part of its planned expansion. One person close to the Universal team told me that an aspect of Koolhaas's assignment is to deal with the tower: "How do you flatten that building, without, maybe, having to do it literally?" It is not surprising, then—considering Bronfman's almost reflexive impulse to diminish his predecessors, while at the same time making a show of deference—that, to celebrate the anniversary of Wasserman's sixtieth year at the company, Bronfman named the tower the Lew R. Wasserman Building.

THE company that Bronfman acquired in 1995 had solid core assets—in music, in movie and television production, in recreation, and in publishing—that needed to be galvanized. Wasserman and Sheinberg had tried to bring that about with the Matsushita sale, but it forced them instead to sit out the crucial years of the early nineties, when other entertainment giants seized opportunities (such as buying or starting their own broadcast or cable outlets) and positioned themselves for intense global competition.

Still, MCA had been churning out steady, if somewhat flat, earnings through the early nineties, and in 1995, the year of the Seagram acquisition, the music and recreation divisions were especially strong. Television was the only Universal division that was losing money and probably deserved to be called "broken." For Wasserman and Sheinberg this was a painful irony; television had been their medium. For years, MCA had dominated the field. In the late sixties and early seventies, when Sheinberg was the president of Universal TV, sixteen of thirty-five network shows became theirs. However, in the eighties, the television business became more difficult. MCA, which excelled at one-hour dramas like "Murder, She Wrote" and "Law & Order," lost its edge as the hottest shows became half-hour comedies. Comedy was a riskier, more speculative game—a studio had to bankroll a lot of shows to find one big hit that would pay for all the rest. It was hard for Wasserman and Sheinberg—conditioned by long hegemony, expecting benefit with little risk, famous for their cost-consciousness—to make this adjustment. Then, in the mid-eighties, Kerry McCluggage, the president of Universal Television, brought in a number of talented comedy writers, such as Barry Kemp, and assured them that the studio would give comedy writers and producers much more freedom and support than it had in the past. The experiment worked: their team wrote and produced "Coach" and "Major Dad"—two half-hour shows that were ultimately sold into highly profitable syndication. But in 1991, after the Matsushita acquisition, McCluggage failed to receive an expected promotion to chairman of television, so he left for Paramount, and he holds that position there today. Much of the Universal television talent ultimately went with him.

IN an attempt to bring Universal TV into the comedy business, Bronfman and his team made a deal with Brillstein-Grey Entertainment, the TV production company launched by the management firm that Bernie Brillstein built and that is now run by Brad Grey. Grey is one of Hollywood's most powerful personal managers, a protégé of Ovitz's and a consummate salesman. He pointed out to Bronfman that, with Brillstein, he had managed some of the hottest comedy talent in recent years (including the stars of "Saturday Night Live"). Bronfman was apparently convinced that this experience managing comedy talent might be translated into hit shows. Universal was not the first to bet on the equation: Columbia Pictures had financed the start-up of Grey's production company, in 1991, and in 1994 ABC had invested a hundred million dollars in a joint venture.



By the time Bronfman appeared on the scene, there were indications that Brillstein-Grey was not producing the kinds of hits that would justify the cost of these deals. In addition, because the management arm was a separate entity, having a piece of the production company would not guarantee Universal access to the comedy talent it needed. Nonetheless, Universal aggressively pursued the deal—in part, some say, because Ron Meyer was so competitive with his former fellow-agent Michael Ovitz, who in late 1995 had become the president of Disney. According to two executives at Disney, which had acquired ABC, Ovitz wanted to buy into Brillstein-Grey, but Michael Eisner, the chairman of Disney, vetoed it (and ABC has dissolved the joint venture, ahead of schedule). Universal, meanwhile, was also negotiating to buy a stake in Brillstein-Grey Entertainment. "We valued it"—the piece Universal was negotiating to buy—"from zero to fifteen million dollars," one Disney executive told me. "I had a side conversation with Tom"—Tom Pollock, who was then the vice-chairman of Universal. "He valued it at fifteen million. Tom told them the truth! But then it was this thing between Ronnie and Mike." Meyer and Ovitz ended up in a bidding war, even though Universal was "bidding against something that didn't exist"—because Ovitz didn't have the power to deal. The result was that Universal ended up paying more than seventy-five million dollars for something that by many estimates was worth only a fraction of that. Frank Biondi, whom Bronfman brought in as chairman and C.E.O. in the spring of 1996, contends that the deal could still turn out quite well for Universal, especially if Brillstein-Grey's new show, "Just Shoot Me," proves to be a hit. "We're all pretty happy—happier than when we bought it, and we were happy then," he says. "It's in better shape now."

ARDOR

Nursing her I felt alive
in the animal moment,
scenting the predator.
Her death was the worst thing
that could happen,
and caring for her was best.

After she died I screamed,
upsetting the depressed dog
who brought me her blue
sneaker. Now in the third
vanished year, I no longer
address the wall covered
with many photographs,
or call her "you"
in a poem. She recedes
into the granite museum
of Jane Kenyon 1947-1995.

I long for the absent
woman of different faces
who makes metaphors
and chops garlic, drinking
a glass of Chardonnay,
oiling the wok, humming
to herself, maybe thinking
how to conclude a poem.
When I make love now,
something is awry.
Last autumn a woman said,
"I mistrust your ardor."

This winter in Florida
I loathed the old couples
my age who promenaded
in their slack flesh
and held hands. I gazed
at young women with desire
and outrage—unable to love
or work, to stay at home
or travel, to die or live.

Hours are slow and weeks
rapid in their vacancy.
Each day lapses as I recite
my complaints. Lust is grief
that has turned over in bed
to look the other way.

—Donald Hall

To Bronfman, the idea of having Barry Diller solve Universal's problems with TV—a tough business, for which he had no personal affinity—must have seemed irresistible. Diller has been Bronfman's friend and mentor since the two met, more than twenty years ago, when Diller was an executive at Paramount and Bronfman was a twenty-year-old youth looking for a toehold in Hollywood. Diller—thirteen years older than Bronfman, acerbic, and sure of himself—is recognized as an unusually creative executive, with an impressive track record in both the business and the programming sides of entertainment. Bronfman is said to have remarked to a friend recently that Diller is "a unique talent," of which "there are only a few in a generation." And the day Bronfman announced the television deal between Universal and Diller's HSN, he was described by one person as "euphoric." That euphoria was soon dispelled by the reaction of his peers. They seemed to be looking at the deal from opposite points of view: Bronfman mesmerized by what he was getting in Diller, Hollywood aghast at what he was giving up.

When Diller resigned as chairman of Fox, Inc., in 1992, he had vowed that he would never work for anyone again. It was in part to satisfy that requirement that the deal was structured in such a peculiar way: Universal received securities that would effectively give it forty-five per cent of Diller's company, but Diller retained the exclusive right to vote those shares until his death or removal as chairman, unless he chose to relinquish it sooner. Bronfman shrugs off criticism of how much he gave up to Diller: "Whether I own forty-eight per cent or sixty per cent or a hundred per cent, if I've got Barry Diller running it I'm not going to be in there telling him what to do or who not to hire or what to put on the air," he told me.

The issue, however, is not controlling what Diller does; Diller may well succeed (without Bronfman's supervision) in his ambitious plan to build USA Networks into a hybrid cable-and-broadcast network with a footing in electronic commerce. Rather, the issue is what Universal gave up by severing nearly all its domestic TV and cable assets (it kept its TV library and its international production business) from the rest of the company. Part of the credo of the new Universal has been to promote synergy among divisions, in contrast to the internecine battling at the old MCA—and synergy is hard to square with selling off TV. There has also been much talk about creating a more powerful Universal brand, with cross-marketing between various divisions, as Disney and Fox have done so well; and Universal's cable network, USA—renamed the Universal Channel—could have been key to that effort. Bronfman does not dispute that TV should be a part of a major entertainment company. But he has always stressed that he will be regaining control of his TV assets, strengthened and expanded, he expects, by Diller. Bronfman told me that he would not have agreed to the sale if he had not been assured of this recovery. But provisions of the deal detailing how Diller's control is to be protected are much clearer than those having to do with how Bronfman's is to be restored.

Even if one ignores the strategic loss to Universal—which now, alone among the major studios, has almost no domestic-television operation of its own—and looks at the HSN sale only in financial terms, it still seems to favor Diller. In order to make the deal, Universal—

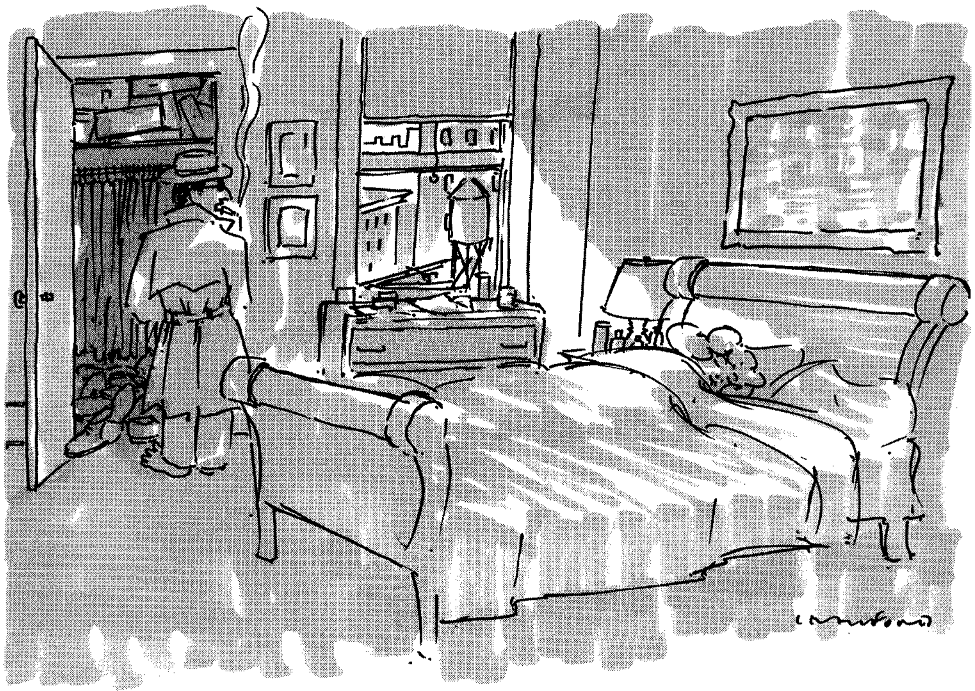
which had owned USA and its companion the Sci-Fi Channel in a joint venture with Viacom—first had to buy out its partner, for $1.7 billion. Diller, however, got all of USA, including the Sci-Fi Channel, and most of Universal's domestic-TV production-and-distribution business, paying only $1.2 billion in cash and about three billion in HSN paper. Bronfman, these days, likes to point to the run-up in the market value of Diller's stock and note that he has already created three-quarters of a billion dollars in paper value. Nevertheless, the fact that Diller's stock has taken off while Universal's remains stagnant gives the market's verdict on who got the better deal. The real prize for Diller was the USA Network, which has one of the five biggest cable-network subscriber bases in the country. One entertainment executive has said, "This is a great deal for Barry. How could he have got access to seventy-three million homes? It could have taken him the rest of his career."

It was, perhaps, because this deal seemed so lopsided—as though Bronfman had amputated a limb, while Diller had seized a storybook opportunity—that Bronfman, Diller, and their associates have gone to such lengths to stress that the idea was Bronfman's. It became a much-told tale: how Bronfman, last May, had invited Diller to dinner at his home in New York, with Bronfman's wife, Clarissa, and how Bronfman had broached the idea to Diller, who was taken aback but, upon reflection, eager. "It was Edgar's idea, of course," one person close to the transaction insisted to me. "And I thought it was brave of Edgar," this person added, because it was predictable that the deal would be perceived as being to Diller's advantage.

I asked Bronfman how the idea had occurred to him. He paused, gazed out the window, and then replied that he had first thought of the deal in the early spring of 1997. By that time, Seagram and Viacom had been in litigation over their partnership in the USA Network for about a year, and it seemed likely that one or the other could end up owning the whole thing. So USA was on his mind when he happened to have a conversation with Geffen about how pleased Geffen was with his investment in HSN—a mélange of seemingly unprepossessing assets that Diller had cobbled together as a company. In 1995, Diller had got a controlling interest in Silver King Communications, a group of a dozen UHF stations, and to that he'd added the failed Savoy Pictures Entertainment, which offered him a few more stations, and also the Home Shopping Network. In February, 1997, Geffen had bought an eight-million-dollar stake in HSN, which he considered a great buy because the stations were undervalued. (After the Universal-HSN deal, it became a really great buy, the value of HSN stock having almost tripled since Geffen's purchase.) This talk got Bronfman thinking about an earlier scheme, proposed by Diller in the summer of 1995, for Universal to take a run at CBS, using the USA Network as a vehicle. "I thought, Gee . . . I began to think of that asset"—meaning HSN—and he went on, "Then the elegance of that long-ago idea of USA buying CBS made enormous sense." Then, as though he were intercepting his listener's thoughts, he quickly added, "O.K., Silver King is not CBS, but I started to think."

Diller, however, brusquely dismissed the idea that there was any link between his old idea of USA's acquiring CBS and this transaction. "That concept has nothing to do with this," he said. In Diller's version of events, Bronfman simply proposed to him that they "commingle our TV assets." Diller said, "I saw, omigod, USA, Sci-Fi, that plus our stations! Because our stations covered thirty-nine per cent of the U.S., and their USA seventy-two and a half per cent—but in unduplicated coverage it was ninety-one and a half per cent of the U.S.! I knew that. He did not, because he did not understand our TV stations." Thus, according to Diller, Bronfman—the putative author of this deal—did not grasp his partner's strategic rationale.

Diller's and Bronfman's accounts of what happened after this initial conversation are also dramatically at odds. Diller said that after he had expressed his keen interest to Bronfman "we went through a long series of conversations," and that "it took many, many months." The deal's phenomenally complex structuring was done, Diller said, by Victor Kaufman (who had joined Diller from Savoy), on the HSN side, and Robert Matschullat, the vice-chairman of Seagram, and "a tiny team of lawyers." Knotty issues were relayed to Diller and Bronfman. One person explained that the reason for these intensive meetings, which continued through the summer, was to have the elaborate, convoluted mechanism ready so that when Universal succeeded in acquiring Viacom's half of USA Bronfman and Diller could move quickly. And Diller told me that he and Bronfman "made this deal, on the principal terms, probably a month or two before it was announced," and that "we ba-

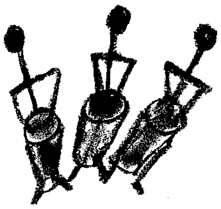


"Seen my gumshoes, doll?"

sically said, 'Unless we screw this up, we're going to do this.'"

In Bronfman's version of events, however, he proposed the deal, Diller responded with interest, and then nothing much happened for several months, until Viacom and Universal were able to come to terms on USA. It was only then, in mid-September, that "I called Barry," Bronfman said. "I said, 'I think we may have a deal.' He said, '*Really*'"—Bronfman imitated Diller's bass tone—"as only Barry can. 'Let's meet.' And the first meeting was between me, Barry, Victor Kaufman, Bob Matschullat, and Frank Biondi." That meeting, Bronfman said, occurred on September 23rd of last year.

What appears to be Bronfman's revisionism can probably be explained by the fact that he has been at great pains recently to minimize the degree to which he kept Frank Biondi out of the loop. Even if one assumes that Biondi was told in late September, the inescapable fact remains that Bronfman—standard-bearer for the new, non-autocratic, collegial culture at Universal—decided to fundamentally restructure the company without consulting his C.E.O. Moreover, he had sold off those assets, TV and cable, in which Biondi, the former head of Viacom, had the most expertise. Someone very close to the transaction has said, "By the time Frank found out, I know it was done—it was a fait accompli. He was not to edit or add to it." Even as Diller and Bronfman were completing the deal, Biondi had been talking openly about his plans for running USA. One executive who dealt with him then, in mid-September, recalled Biondi's saying, "'We're going to revitalize their ad sales, we're going to improve the branding and the focus.' He was way out there, genuinely excited.... You don't do that to a senior executive."



A common assumption in Hollywood is that Diller persuaded Bronfman to keep the negotiations secret—out of fear that Biondi would try to kill the deal, or that he would bring an expertise to the negotiating table that Universal otherwise lacked. I asked Diller whether he had demanded that Biondi not be told. "I only said that it is vital that we keep this quiet," Diller replied. "I could not be involved in a transaction that I did not complete. If this got out, I would have to run Venezuela!... I had been characterized as a person who had failed twice in acquisitions. With HSN, people thought I was crazy. I had to make this work.... In the image of the world, I had failed twice and was now in a small-time venture." In the past few years, he had tried—and failed—to buy Paramount and then CBS.

I asked again whether he had demanded that Biondi not be told. "I'm not going to talk about that," he said. "He didn't, and doesn't, work for me. Ask Universal."

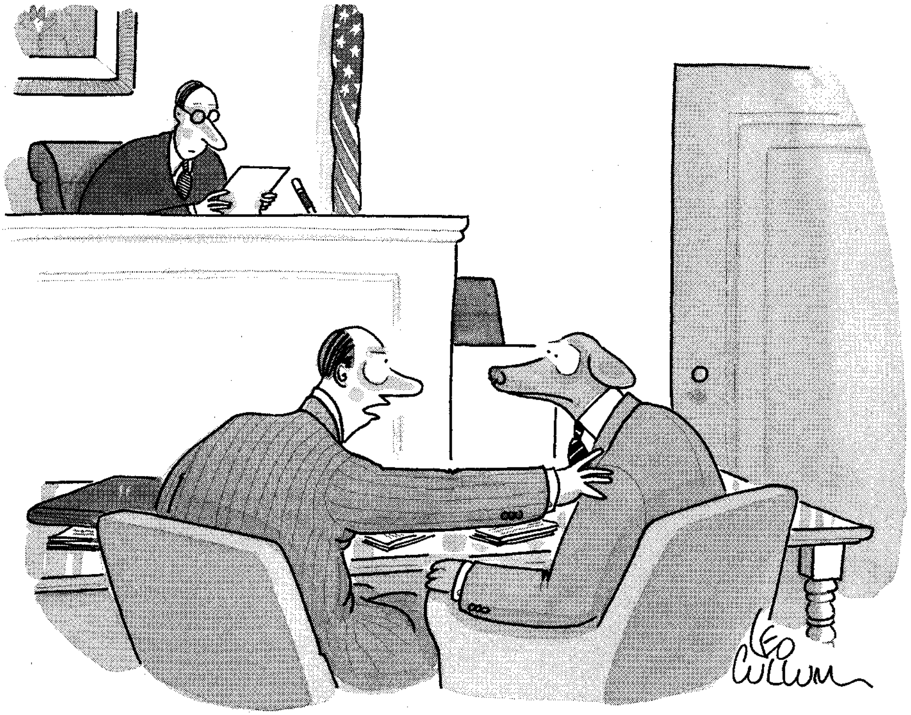
Biondi acknowledged that by the time Bronfman told him about the deal "Edgar and Barry already had a handshake on it." He said that he nonetheless objected to it for a number of reasons. He was afraid that the market would see Universal as "strategically naïve." He also thought that Universal TV was showing signs of a turnaround (with the success of "Hercules" and "Xena: Warrior Princess"), and that—especially with USA—he could do as well with cable and TV as Diller. But, he said, his biggest concern was the impact on the organization: "We have spent a lot of time building a team, and a lot of time talking about 'Seagram values.' I was worried about morale. People here said, 'Hey! I signed up to work for a studio, not a home-shopping network!'" In the months since the deal closed, those concerns have proved "even more prophetic than I'd feared," Biondi added. "People in the film studio, in the recreation division, are asking, 'Are we next? You did it to them!'"

THE firings at Universal in mid-April began with one of Bronfman's new teammates, Howard Weitzman, perhaps because of the Brillstein-Grey deal. (Sandy Climan, another member of that team, departed last year, to return to C.A.A.) Then, apparently in response to the poor showing of Universal's movie releases—including "Mercury Rising" and "Blues Brothers 2000"—its co-president was fired, and so were two extremely well-regarded marketing heads. In the light of all this, Meyer's own position was beginning to look a little tenuous, and there were rumblings about whether Biondi had been a sufficiently engaged, forceful C.E.O. Indeed, when I interviewed Biondi a couple of weeks ago he pointed to Meyer's many ill-conceived production deals, saying, "I think Ronnie would tell you, 'I wanted to make a strong statement—maybe I made too strong a statement.'" Biondi also suggested that the corporate structure he had inherited when he came to the company would now have to change, in a way that would reduce Meyer's responsibilities and allow Biondi to be more "hands-on," as he put it. "I've never worked with a chief operating officer before, and Ron's never been a chief operating officer before. As it is, I'm not really running [the company], because people are reporting to Ron. That's what Ronnie was hired to do, he deserved a shot at it.... I think as it goes on it will go to a joint-reporting structure."

There had been indications in the last few months that some dismissals were likely. When I interviewed Edgar, Sr., in February, he told me that his son had made "some mistakes in personnel—but with 20/20 hindsight." He also remarked, "I am always yelling at Edgar about the movies they are making.... Look at David Lean." He was referring to the famous director of "Lawrence of Arabia." "He made expensive movies, but he never lost a dime on them."

Unlike most C.E.O.s of major public companies, this one has to do more than listen politely to his father's (not to mention his uncle's) armchair critiques. Relationships within the Bronfman family have had a profound effect on the course of Seagram, particularly in the last decade, and so far that has worked to Edgar, Jr.,'s advantage. It was certainly family feeling that prompted Edgar, Sr., to hand the reins to his son and let him move the company out of a "boring," if profitable, business, like DuPont, into one more in line with his interests and avocations—in essence, to hand him almost six billion dollars of shareholders' money with which to learn on the job. Edgar, Jr., himself acknowledged, referring to the vicissitudes of the last few years, "If the family didn't control this, it would be a lot harder to take the heat."

Charles Bronfman has decided, apparently against his better judgment, to support his nephew's decisions, primarily in order to keep peace in the family. One friend of the Bronfmans also explained to me that since it was Edgar, Sr., who came up with the strategy that ultimately garnered the Bronfmans their DuPont



"You're going to do time, but I'm trying to get it in dog years."

stock, Charles felt that he should defer to his brother. It is that kind of familial thinking, rather than bloodless business calculation, that continues to drive major decisions at the company; for example, when I told Edgar, Sr., that Diller had remarked to me that Universal might not regain control of the cable and TV assets for thirty years, Edgar, Sr., responded quickly, "Fine. I won't be around—but my children and grandchildren will." In family circles, too, tolerant reference has been made to Edgar, Jr.,'s learning curve. "Of course he is going to make mistakes," Edgar, Sr., said, with a tinge of impatience. "But the only way to make no mistakes is to do nothing."

Edgar, Jr., believes that the protection provided by family ties will give him time to extirpate the old Universal culture and get results. He expects two major theme parks opening in the next few years—one in Osaka and one in Florida—to be a breakthrough for the company. Still, the organization that Bronfman called "broken," is, under his aegis, a long way from being fixed. One former Universal executive said to me, "Were there problems at the company? Of course! But today, three years later, ask people at the company who's running it and no one knows. They can change the logo and have casual-dress day, but no one knows what the vision of the company is anymore. They can criticize Sid and Lew, but no one was ever in doubt that Sid and Lew were running the company."

With the very public turmoil at Universal in the last several weeks, several long-standing rumors began once again to circulate. One person told me that about a year ago, he believed, Bronfman made an overture to DreamWorks, suggesting that it be brought in to Universal, and that it was rebuffed because the DreamWorks team was still intent on making the company a success on its own. Now people are speculating about new discussions between Bronfman and the DreamWorks principals—Katzenberg, Geffen, and Spielberg. DreamWorks badly needs a hit at the box office, and it has become almost the received wisdom in Hollywood that Geffen may soon cash in on his friendship with Edgar, Jr., as Diller has already done—especially if "Prince of Egypt," DreamWorks' first animated feature, does poorly. One veteran entertainment executive commented, "Everybody is saying the ultimate rescuer of DreamWorks is Edgar. He's like a piñata! Hit him and money comes out."

What ultimately occurs between Bronfman and EMI will be a good test of family support. Bronfman's saving grace, to date, is his shrewd acquisition of MCA. If he does not do the same with EMI—which is, after all, a sensible strategic move but no panacea—his dream could become his undoing. Charles Bronfman is rumored to oppose the deal, or, at least, Seagram's being the sole buyer; and that may be why there has been speculation that Seagram might take on a partner, such as the financial investor Kohlberg Kravis Roberts. Charles deferred to his brother at the outset of Seagram's show-business foray, but that does not mean he is acquiescent. On the contrary, one person told me that when Charles's business associates have come through Universal, as they periodically do, "they do not disguise their anger." In the aftermath of Seagram's DuPont selloff, and with the chaos at Universal, the Bronfmans cannot afford to put eight billion dollars—or even four—in the service of Edgar, Jr.,'s desire, considerable as it is. Someone who knows Bronfman well said, "Edgar has had only one idea: it's buy EMI, buy EMI, buy EMI. Owning USA has never been about making TV work. It's been about his being able to sell it . . . to get money to buy EMI. And then, if he succeeds, it will truly be the Music Corporation of America—even though he's changed the name."

I asked Bronfman about his interest in EMI, and he responded, "Buying EMI . . . would make the strategy completely understandable. But if it means overpaying I would rather be called a schmuck for another few years." Bronfman insists that he is in for the long haul. And, now that many in Hollywood have turned on him, he has seemed to be trying on a modified persona for size—that of the outsider who is at odds not only with the old MCA culture but all Hollywood's, and who will prevail by doing things his way. He told me that when he was about thirteen he learned a very important lesson from his father. "He got off the phone, and I must've been impressed by what I just heard, because I said, 'You have a lot of power, don't you?' He said, 'Remember one thing about power. Having real power is not having to use it.' As C.E.O. of the company that owns this one, I'm going to get my way, but I don't have to yell about it." Bronfman added, "The paradigm out here in Hollywood is to manage by intimidation and fear. One of the things I've heard out here is 'He's soft.' Well," he concluded, "time will tell." ♦

CONSTRUCTING SHAKESPEARE *The Royal Shakespeare Company sets the stage for a rare three-week residency at the Brookly*
coming," Peter Weiss's "Marat/Sade," David Edgar's version of "Nicholas Nickleby"—as well as vigorous reinterpretations of the classic
fifteenth-century morality play "Everyman," an ultra-modern "Hamlet," a streamlined, Kabuki-flavored "Cymbeline," a sumptuou

Academy of Music this month. In recent decades, the R.S.C. has been a platform for the best in modern drama—Harold Pinter's "The Homelike Peter Brook's "A Midsummer Night's Dream." A gala event on May 18th will kick off this welcome residency, which includes the period production of "Henry VIII," and Samuel Beckett's mordant monologue "Krapp's Last Tape." Photograph by Chris Callis.

LIFE AND LETTERS

THE MOTHER OF CONFUSION

How did Gertrude Stein become the first true voice of modern literature?

BY CLAUDIA ROTH PIERPONT

“PABLO & Matisse have a maleness that belongs to genius,” Gertrude Stein scrawled in a notebook, sometime in her early Paris years, about the two painters she planned to join in re-creating Western art. She was an aspiring writer just past thirty when she met the paired geniuses, in 1905, and their spectacular audacity helped her determine her own ambitions: to overturn the nineteenth century’s constraining rules and prejudices, and find new words for people’s secret inner lives. Stein—a Jewish woman who’d studied psychology at Harvard—had fled America to join her brother on the Left Bank in 1903, to write an anguished novel while he painted mediocre nudes. It was at that moment, when modern art was being born, that the Steins began to buy the best and most shocking paintings; soon the best and most unshockable people were stopping by to view their riotous, thick-hung walls—and were staying for dinner. Although Leo had begun the collection, Gertrude was the one Picasso wanted to paint and the one he called Pard, using some cowboy slang he’d picked up from American comic strips. Casting off her stays and starting a new novel, she began to think it possible that she, too, might be a genius—that she might do in words what Picasso and Matisse had done in paint—and if maleness was a necessary part of it, well, “*moi aussi* perhaps,” she added in her notebook. That was not a problem but an opportunity to demonstrate a truth of her own secret inner life.

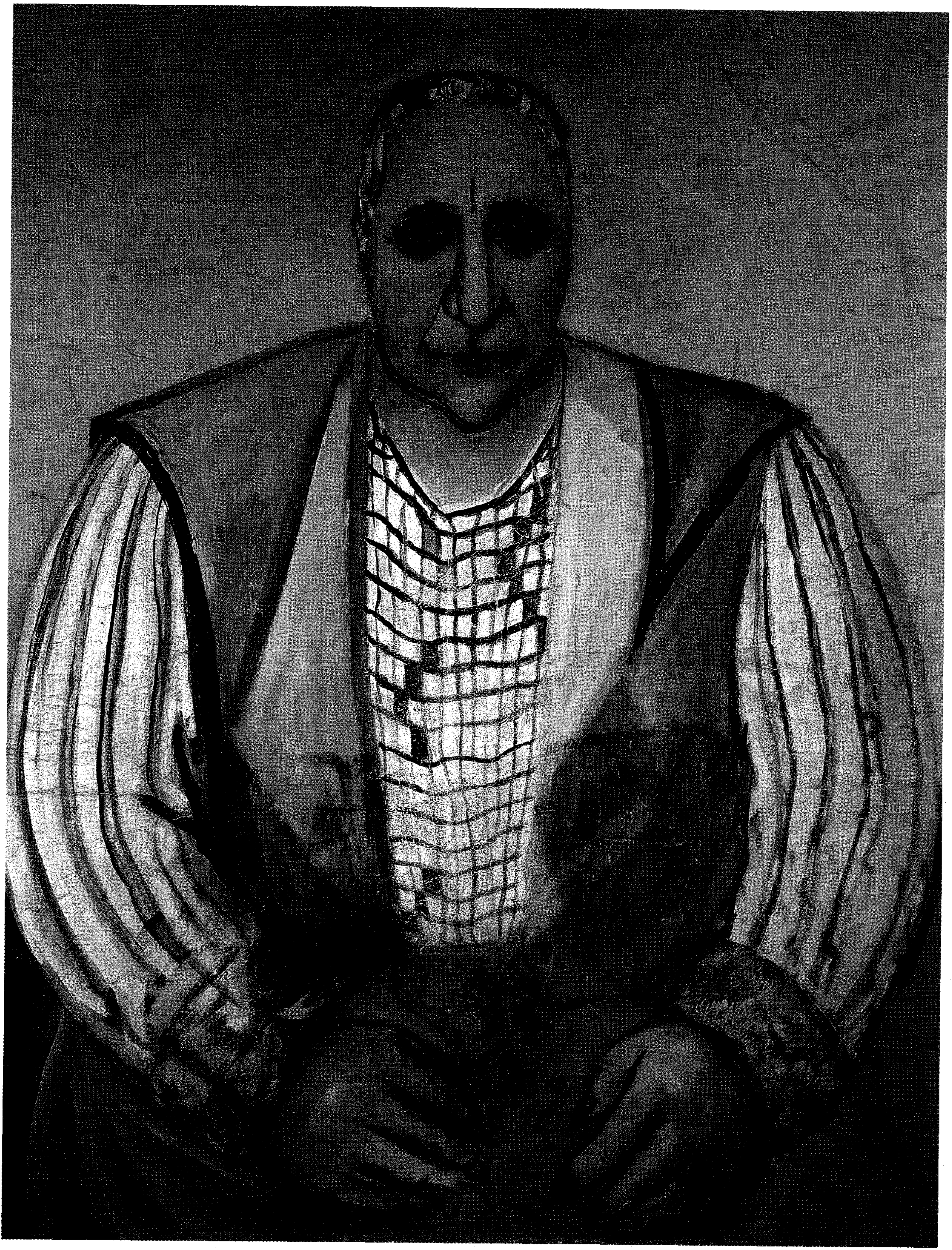
The first decade of the new century was barely over before she had achieved a version of her goal: the first indubitably modern literary style. Before James Joyce (as she volubly insisted all her life), before Dada or Surrealism, before Bloomsbury or the roman-fleuve, Gertrude Stein was writing books and stories that were formally fractured, emotionally inscrutable, and, above all, dauntingly unreadable. This achievement has given the Library of America a particularly difficult task in assembling two volumes of Stein’s selected works. It is often forgotten that Stein commanded a broad literary range, from the psychological realism of her earliest fiction to the journalistic accounts of life in occupied France during the Second World War. The work that made her famous and still earns her canonical status is, of course, the barrage of janglingly repetitive lyric obfuscation that has come to be known as Steinese. “A rose is a rose is a rose is a rose,” she wrote, with the philosophical kick of a nursery Wittgenstein. “The sister was not a mister,” she warned, out on a sexual edge, and then she provided her own commentary: “Was this a surprise. It was.” Although she did not write “Yes! We Have No Bananas,” the song has been seriously linked to her influence.

It was by perpetrating such suspiciously significant nonsense, somewhere between the studies of Freud and the logic of the Red Queen—“Before the Flowers of Friendship Faded Friendship Faded” one cautionary title runs—that Stein entered our language as the bard of a culture of confusion, the vastly imperturbable mother of an age that had given up on answers. Yet no one took more vivid pleasure in the questions than she did, or set them out in a more brilliant company, beginning with the famous salon where she gathered Picasso and Matisse and Braque (who was so strong and so amiable that he would help the janitor hang the bigger pictures), and Derain and Juan Gris and Apollinaire. Then, after the Great War, her rooms filled with charter members of the next cultural resurgence, and then the next, as there entered Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Cocteau, Bérard, Tchelitchev, Cecil Beaton, Thornton Wilder, Virgil Thomson, and Richard Wright. For decades, there seemed no end to her gifts of renewal. She was host, sponsor, critic, instigator, frequent foe, and sometimes friend again of some of the century’s finest provocateurs, and it was often hard to tell whether her life was a party or a revolution. But her intent was serious (“desperately” serious, as Alice B. Toklas put it), and she knew all along that the stakes were as high as the opposition was strong. “They needn’t be so afraid of their damn culture,” she erupted early on and, for once, hung back in estimating her powers: “It’d take more than a man like me to hurt it.”

HOW did a girl born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, in 1874 turn into such a disruptive fellow? Her grandparents had sailed from Germany to Baltimore in time for her parents to champion opposing sides in the Civil War—a division that she thought well established the Stein familial spirit. She was the youngest of five children, although she seems to have felt herself to be the youngest of seven, so often did she dwell on two siblings who had died before she was born—an infant boy and a stillborn girl—and without whose deaths neither she nor her brother Leo would have been brought into the world. Both Leo and Gertrude had perceived some regret on their parents’ part at the quality of the substitution. This was one of the things that drew the youngest pair so close together, along with the knowledge that they were smarter than everyone else they knew.

The family moved from Allegheny to Vienna when Gertrude was a baby, then to Paris (where she added French to her English and German), and, finally, to the wilds of Oakland, California, in 1880, when Daniel Stein forbade his children to speak any language but “pure” American English. A cold and domineering man of minimal formal education, Daniel Stein made a small fortune by investing in San Francisco cable cars, and

PIERRE TAL-COAT’S “PORTRAIT OF GERTRUDE STEIN”, 1935, ©1998 ARS, NY/ADAGP, PARIS/THE BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY



It was hard to tell whether Stein's life was a party or a revolution. But her intent was "desperately" serious, as Alice B. Toklas put it.

overloaded his children with tutors and lessons and ambitions. Leo recalled his childhood as a torturous regime lived out under his father's constant disapproval, while his softhearted mother was too weak to make any difference; Gertrude would concede only that she considered it a foolish idea to have had an unhappy anything, let alone something as important as a childhood.

But there can have been little room for bluster back in 1885, when their mother began to show symptoms of cancer. Three years of wasting pain and withdrawal turned Milly Stein into something of a household wraith before she died, in 1888, when her younger daughter was fourteen. In "The Making of Americans," the massive novel that Gertrude Stein wrote about her family—the first stunningly original disaster of modernism, finished in 1911, and written as though from deep within a halting, troubled mind—she suggests that illness had rendered her mother so nearly invisible that neither her husband nor her children noticed when she finally disappeared:

> Sometimes then they would be good to her, mostly they forgot about her, slowly she died away among them and then there was no more of living for her, she died away from all of them.... Mostly for them she had no existence in her and then she died away and the gentle scared little woman was all that they ever after remembered of her.

Stein's notebooks, however, tell a different story: "All stopped after death of mother."

In fact, the household fell into chaos. Eighteen-year-old Bertha struggled to make up for a maternal presence that no one else would even acknowledge was missing. But if Gertrude had thought her mother unprepossessing she found her older sister sorely disgusting: "pure female," she wrote in her notebook for "The Making of Americans." Alone and untended, Gertrude left high school—her most thorough early biographer, Brenda Wineapple, states that she simply vanished from all records—and plunged into what she later called her "dark and dreadful" days. She took to reading with a kind of violence, buying piles of books (often with advice from Leo) and gulping them in great, haphazard quantities. And she developed an almost equally violent need for food—"books and food, food and books, both excellent things," she wrote. Her discovery of food as a way back to early childhood, to "the full satisfied sense of being stuffed up with eating," marked her first divergence from the ways of her beloved Leo, who was just discovering that he preferred to starve.

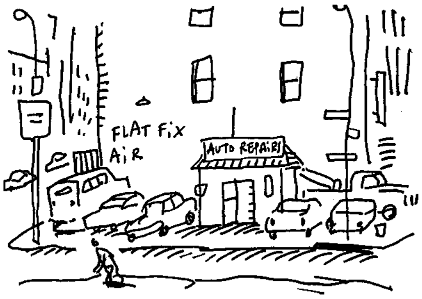
The case against Daniel Stein was set out many times by his two youngest children. They hated him, and yet they respected his power; they feared him, and yet they wanted to be like him, if only for self-protection. More ambiguously, "The Making of Americans" contains some bizarrely dreamlike scenes that, among Stein scholars, have long raised the question of incest. (In the clearest example, a grown daughter accuses her father of having introduced her to an unnamed vice, and her words cause him to fall down paralyzed.)

In 1995, the biographer Linda Wagner-Martin, having studied Gertrude's notes for the novel, concluded that it was Bertha who had been sexually approached by their father: Gertrude wrote of his "coming in to her one night, to come and keep him warm." Complicating matters further, Gertrude elaborated by referring to a similar incident she had undergone with an uncle, her father's brother Solomon. "Scene like the kind I had with Sol," she wrote, and added, in a strangulated shorthand, "like me what he tried to do." Whatever actually took place, it is striking that just at those moments when she approaches what she cannot say, even in her own notes, this cautious writer begins to sound like quintessential Gertrude Stein. "Fathers loving children young girls," she goes on, and it appears that at least one branch of modern literary style may derive from a fearful evasion of meaning, and from the necessary invention—and wasn't that necessity "pure female"?—of a secret code.

"Then our life without a father began a very pleasant one" was Gertrude's typically cloudless way of addressing the death of Daniel Stein—by apoplexy, three years after the death of his wife. Certainly his death precipitated a release of productive energy in his younger daughter. In 1893, she followed Leo to Harvard—this was a year before the Harvard Annex for women became Radcliffe College—where, studying English and psychology, she turned out a quantity of notebooks in which her private turmoils were forced into traditional narrative forms. Her idols were George Eliot and Henry James, but her first work to be published was "Normal Motor Automatism," an experimental report she produced under the aegis of William James, who was doubtless responsible for routing her toward psychology as a science rather than as an aspect of literature.

In 1898, she went on to medical school at Johns Hopkins, planning to study the mysterious female affliction known as hysteria. Freud's book on the subject had been published three years earlier, but the self-defeating frailties of women had preoccupied Stein since her childhood. Now she found refuge in the theory, not uncommon at the time, that a few rare women are born exceptions to their sex. To be extremely accomplished or intelligent or determined—to aspire to genius—was to be, by definition, less female. As far as she could see, the only thing most women excelled at was having babies.

She did well in her first two years of medical school, when the work centered on the classroom and the lab, but she had a great deal of difficulty when it came to visiting wards filled with sick human beings. And then, in her third year, she fell passionately in love with a young Bryn Mawr graduate who was attached to another female medical student. The woman was responsive but elusive. Instead of studying, Gertrude pined; she planned her life around seeing her beloved, or not seeing her. Sabotaged by the very parts of herself that she had been trying to cut off—the emotional, the uncontrolled—she failed to graduate. But by then, of course, she claimed that she didn't care. She no longer wished to be a doctor. She had discovered that the only way to relieve her suffering was by writing about it. She was a novelist after all.



VIRGINIA WOOLF believed that no woman had succeeded in writing the truth of the experience of her own body—that women and language both would have to change considerably before anything like that could happen. She also believed that those who struggled toward the liberation of language—like herself and Stein and Eliot and Joyce—were bound to fail at least as often as they succeeded, and in this respect she judged Stein's "contortions" a generational misfortune. Woolf was eight years Stein's junior, and in many ways her experience and ambitions ran a parallel course: the death of her mother when she was thirteen; the influence of her dangerously overbearing father; the sexual "interference" inflicted by her stepbrothers; her love of women; her literary interest in male and female aspects of character and in an androgynous ideal. Also like Stein, Woolf had enough money to write exactly as she pleased, and that was surely a major factor in allowing these two individuals, so different in their gifts and temperaments, to become the opposing poles of risk-all modern writing in a woman's voice.

The anguished novel that Stein wrote when she joined her brother in Paris was an account of the love affair that had been tearing her apart. The first selection in the Library of America edition, "Q.E.D."—standing for quod erat demonstrandum, the conclusion to a geometric proof—was, ironically, one of the few works Stein never tried to publish; although not explicitly erotic, it was plainly open about the fact that all three members of its sexual triangle were women. No explanations, no apologies, no wells of loneliness. Stein seems to have written the book as a kind of exorcism, incorporating in it actual letters and conversations, with the goal of restoring her serenity and never losing it again.

The book is fascinating not only for the information it provides about Stein but for the Jamesian acuity of its psychological portraits. It is hard to predict how far Stein might have succeeded in adapting this tradition—she was then twenty-nine—but the autobiographical narrator hints at why the attempt would be abandoned. She has always had a "puritanic horror" of passion, she confesses, and the pain of this love affair has rendered it absolute. "You meant to me a turgid and complex world," she rebukes her beloved—railing also against the Jamesian tasks of emotional probing and dissection—before she heads off for a world of "obvious, superficial, clean simplicity." What she didn't know yet was how to find it.

"They're not rich-rich, but they're rich enough so that we wouldn't feel uncomfortable around them."

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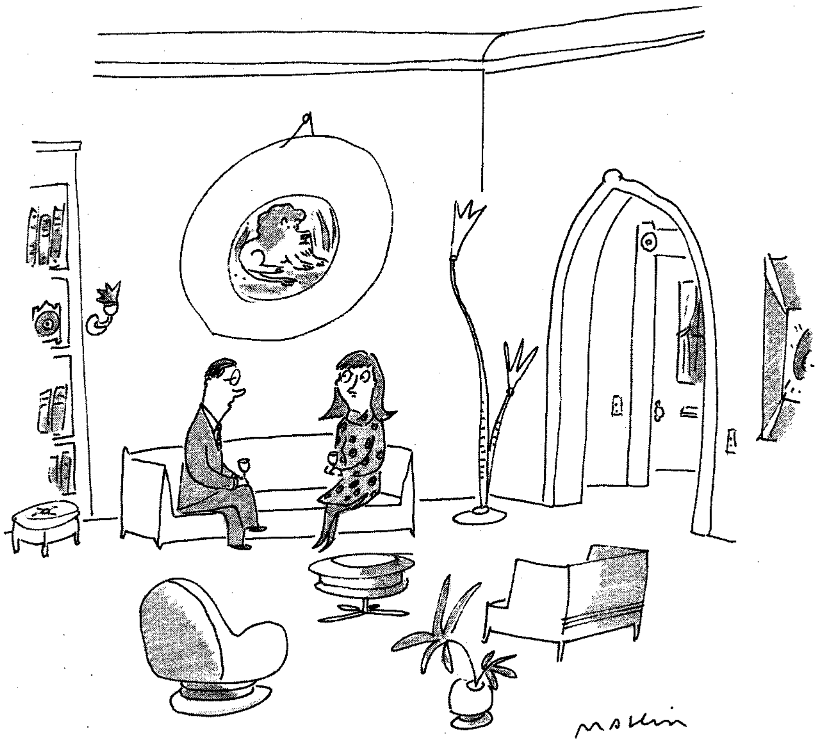
After a year of frantic travelling, Gertrude moved in permanently with Leo, who was renting an apartment on the Rue de Fleurus. Because her erudite brother didn't approve of "Q.E.D.," she wrote only late at night, hurrying to bed before dawn so the birds wouldn't keep her awake. During ordinary hours, she was more than ever his pupil, with everything to learn about the flourishing art of painting. When Leo took her to see the work of a young Spanish painter in a gallery owned by a former circus clown, she initially refused to chip in her share of the funds necessary to make a purchase. She thought the long figure of a nude woman had ugly, monkeylike legs and feet. The dealer offered to cut off the offending parts and sell just the head, but the strange Americans eventually decided to buy the whole thing.

Picasso's "Young Girl with a Basket of Flowers" was soon followed into the Steins' salon by many other Picassos, as well as Matisses and Cézannes. But, most important, it was followed by Picasso himself, who thought Leo a dreadful bore but recognized in Gertrude a companion spirit. He had barely met her when he asked to paint her portrait. Uncharacteristically, he struggled with the subject mightily: after more than eighty sittings, he wiped out the naturalistic head and quit. He returned to the canvas months later, when he was alone, and what he finally produced was not Gertrude Stein as she then appeared—no one thought the portrait looked like her—but the grandly masked *monstre sacré* she would become once she had forged her genius and had paid the price.

It was while Stein was sitting for her portrait, in 1906, that she thought out much of the book that first won her literary renown. Inspired by Flaubert's meticulously understated "A Simple Heart" (which Leo had set her to translate as an exercise in French), Stein's "Three Lives" is a trio of stories about the grim existences of three women—two German-born servants and one poor black—who drift toward their fates in the airless atmosphere of a small American city. Stein's achievement was to make the writing seem as if shaped by the inner states of her characters: the childishly simple diction of those who had never willingly opened a book, the repetitiveness of those who had not much to think about or were unused to being heard. The book was not published until 1909, and then in a tiny edition that Stein paid for herself. The reaction was



"As your attorney, Miss Marlow, may I say that you give good deposition."

• •

astounding on almost any scale. "A very masterpiece of realism" was the general tenor of reviews. Many writers and critics began to see Stein's little book as the start of a truly American, unliterary literature, homely and vernacular and existentially unpresuming—a response suggesting that many writers and critics knew no more of the people she was supposedly writing about than Gertrude Stein did.

Like everything else that she had written up until then (but had not published), "Three Lives" is about Stein's autobiographical obsessions. Here are the vile but attractive father and the mother whose death is hardly noticed, the better-loved dead babies, and a continuous replaying of the tormented love affair. But there is a change: the narrative voice is now so apathetic and the emotional temperature so low that it's no wonder the characters seem half-unconscious. The cause is not their social downtroddenness but the fact that "Three Lives" catches Stein in the very act of administering the emotional anesthesia that marked her style for the rest of her life.

The success of "Three Lives" coincided with two other important developments in Stein's life: Picasso's return from a summer in Spain with his first ventures into Cubism upon his canvases, and the deepening of her relationship with Alice B. Toklas. The result was an explosion that shattered all her effortful old forms. The sudden outpouring of small, fragmented "portraits" and other glittering esoterica is usually said to have been inspired by—depending on one's source or one's inclination—either her desire to write like a Cubist or her need to conceal the erotic joy of her new attachment. Certainly Cubism was vital to Stein, because it provided her with an intellectual rationale for doing exactly what she already longed to do: keep her eyes on the surface. Facet it, mirror it, spin it around, and repeat it ad infinitum but never go back underneath.

WHEN Gertrude first met Alice, in the fall of 1907, she thought her the same type of "pure female" as her sister Bertha, and she was wary. "She listens, she is docile, stupid but she owns you," runs one notebook entry. A tiny, brittle woman, dressed in exotic fringed shawls that seemed to emphasize her ever-remarked-on Semitic features—"an awful Jewess, dressed in a window-curtain" was Mary Berenson's typical assessment—Alice also gave signs of possessing, according to Gertrude, "an exquisite and keen moral sensibility." And there was no doubt that she knew a genius when she met one. (Actually, she claimed that she heard a bell ring every time she met one.) Furthermore, she was absolutely certain (now that she'd seen it) of the world in which she wanted to live. This was a very different world from the one she'd come from, back in San Francisco, where for the past ten years—since her mother's death, when she was nineteen—she'd borne the domestic burdens of a household made up of her father, her grandfather, and her younger brother. None of whom she, gladly, ever saw again.

Stein and Toklas were officially "married" in the summer of 1910, outside Florence, and that fall Alice moved into the Stein ménage on the Rue de Fleurus. So it was that Alice B. Toklas "came to be happier than anybody else who was living then," as Stein wrote in "Ada," a biographical portrait of her bride. Because Alice, for the first time since the death of her mother, now had someone to tell her charming stories to: "some one who was loving was almost always listening." Listening and loving, loving and listening—the paired satisfactions now nearly replaced books and food. Notably, at this time Leo began to display symptoms of chronic deafness, and to starve himself in fasts that lasted as long as thirty days; he claimed to be writing a book on painting, but he couldn't produce a word. Just as Gertrude was becoming the man that being a genius required her to be ("I am very fond of yes sir," she wrote), Leo was turning into the very model of the mysteriously afflicted, hysterical woman she had once been interested in trying to cure. But no longer.

With someone now listening to her so well, Gertrude began to pour out words without hesitation, revision, or second thoughts. Privately, there were the sweet-breathed burps and coos of utter infantile contentment: "Lifting belly fattily./Doesn't that astonish you./You did want me./Say it again./Strawberry." The work she offered to the world made even fewer concessions to standards of sense and communication:

> One whom some were certainly following was one who was completely charming. One whom some were following was one who was charming. One whom some were following was one who was completely charming. One whom some were following was one who was certainly completely charming.

So runs the first paragraph of Stein's "portrait" of Picasso, which was published by Alfred Stieglitz (along with her "portrait" of Matisse) in the magazine *Camera Work* in 1912, a year before the Armory Show introduced modern art to *le tout* New York—with loans from the Stein collection—and made Gertrude Stein about as notorious as the painters whose outrageous principles she was said to share. ("The name of Gertrude Stein is better known in NY today than the name of God!" Mabel Dodge Luhan wrote to her ecstatically, and Stein replied, "Hurrah for *gloire*.") She didn't mind that most of her fame came in the form of parody and ridicule. "They always quote it," she pointed out in what may be her most truly modern observation, "and those they say they admire they do not quote."

All this was too much for Leo. He had hated Cubism from the start, and he didn't hang back from declaring Gertrude's work "Godalmighty rubbish." By late 1913, brother and sister were no longer speaking, and he soon moved out. The collection of paintings was divided more or less equitably, with Gertrude taking the Picassos and Leo the Renoirs; they split the Cézannes between them. (Picasso painted her an apple to make up for one of the Cézannes she lost.) Although Leo later tried to resume contact, she did not respond. "I have very bad headaches and I don't like to commit to paper that which makes me very unhappy," she wrote in one of her notebooks. More than thirty years remained of their lives, but Gertrude and Leo never spoke again. Alice claimed that Gertrude had simply forgotten all about him.

STEIN had won enormous freedoms, but she chose to confine herself to a comfortably narrow space. In the midst of sexually explosive Paris, where the members of Natalie Barney's lesbian circle flaunted their glamour and their liaisons and their belly-dancing parties, Gertrude and Alice ran a salon that was a model of middle-class decorum. Despite occasional unorthodoxies of dress—Gertrude's tents, Alice's draperies—and the Roman-emperor haircut that Gertrude eventually got, they played the roles of two charmingly eccentric ladies who just happened to be married.

The effects of self-confinement on Stein's writing, however, were cruel. Beyond an occasional flash of wit or a happy juxtaposition, her chains of words and repetitions come to suggest a caged animal's pacing—cramped and dulled and slightly desperate. One feels that just outside the strict boundaries imposed by her pen lurked fathers and brothers and arguments and wars. In life, she could be head-on and courageous. During the First World War, she imported a Ford van and learned to drive it (except in reverse) in order to deliver supplies to hospitals all over France, and after the war she and Alice continued to write to the many lonely American soldier "godsons" they had adopted. But nowhere in Stein's "literary" writing did she take in the experience: the wounded, the fear, the tenderness. She was writing less then anyway, devoting much of her time to advising and instructing (and sometimes to feeding and supporting) a group of young writers who found their way to her fabled door: in the twenties, as if by decree, the painters dispersed and the writers appeared. Among these, first in her affections and most fiercely devoted, was the twenty-three-year-old Ernest Hemingway, who sat at her feet and learned to write like a man.

"Gertrude Stein and me are just like brothers," Hemingway crowed to Sherwood Anderson in 1922. He brought her his stories to read and criticize, and they talked for hours while his wife, Hadley, was none too gracefully monopolized by Alice. (Holding off "wives of geniuses" was a stressful part of Alice's occupation; some had to be cornered behind large pieces of furniture.) He credited "Miss Stein" with getting him to give up newspaper work and to concentrate on his serious writing. He commended her method of analyzing places and people. And it was on the Rue de Fleurus that he was advised to go to Spain to see the bullfighting.

In 1925, reviewers of Hemingway's first volume of stories, "In Our Time," recognized stylistic debts to Stein that were unmistakable: drastically short and unadorned sentences, repetition, a "naïveté of language" that suggested a complex, inarticulate emotional state. But for Hemingway the style clearly served as a kind of dam against an opposing sentimental pressure that was rarely if ever felt in Stein's prose. The new American hero was syntactically disengaged because he'd been through hell and had already felt too much; his semi-autism was part of his sexual equipment in a world in which physical courage is destiny and the only truly frightful things are women and emotion. Virginia Woolf—who used "virile" as an insult—particu-

"Tag! Your salary's frozen."

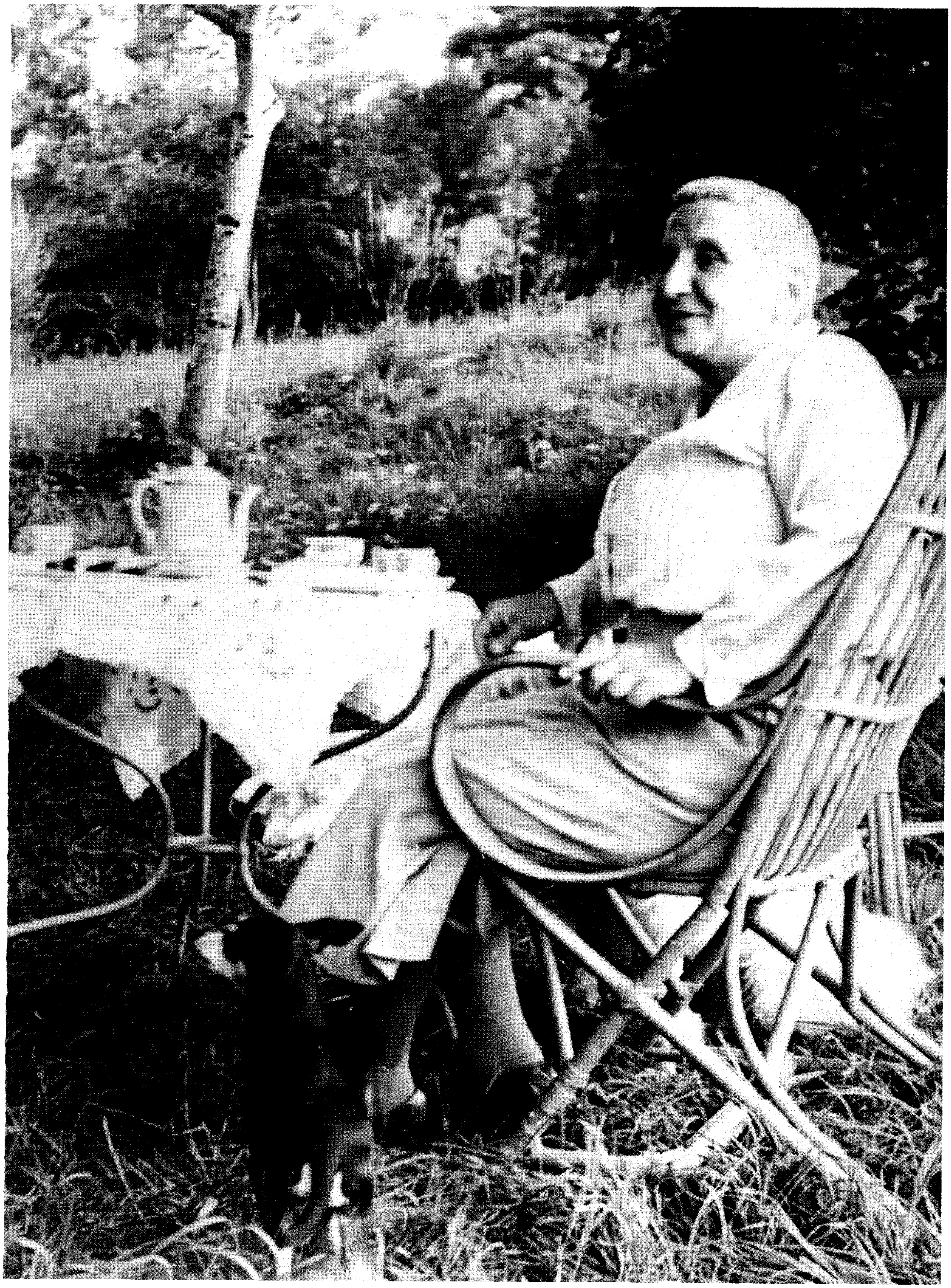
larly deplored Hemingway's exaggeration of male characteristics, for which she blamed the "sexual perturbations" of the times. (This was in 1927, and she was reviewing his aptly titled collection "Men Without Women.") Woolf might have felt differently if she had traced the most famously virile of modern styles to its origins in the work of a woman—albeit a woman who liked to call herself "a roman and Julius Caesar and a bridge and a column and a pillar" (when all that Virginia ever called Vita was "a lighthouse").

Are there male and female characteristics in writing? Male and female sentences? Is the comma a languishing feminine ruse, draining the strength of the tough male verb into a miasma of girlish uncertainties? Writing is self-exposure, and in the post-suffrage, neo-Freudian twenties the fear of what might get exposed was everywhere. Stein believed that the use of a comma was degrading and a sign of weakness because after all you ought to know yourself when you needed to take a breath. Woolf suggested that any woman who wrote in a terse, short-winded style was probably trying to write like a man. But at the heart of their difference is the fact that Woolf didn't see why a woman should want to do anything like a man; feminine generosity was life itself, and the necessary source of male achievement. One could hardly get farther from Stein's perception of the sexes' division of properties. The two women met once—at a party in London, in 1926—and the revulsion was mutual. On Woolf's part, this was a matter of class and snobbery. "Jews swarmed," she wrote of the event in a letter to her sister. On Stein's part, there was defensiveness and bravado, surely based on a perception of the chilly atmosphere and perhaps, too, on the glaringly anomalous presence of a purely female genius.

By the late twenties, Stein and Hemingway had battled often, and they finally parted ways. She never spoke of what had come between them; he could hardly stop speaking of it. Sometimes he claimed that it was Alice, jealous of his relationship with Gertrude ("I always wanted to fuck her and she knew it"), who had caused the break. He also claimed that after Gertrude went through menopause she wanted

Toklas and Stein (both seated) in a neighbor's garden. They ran a salon that w

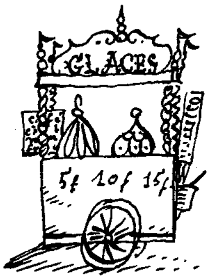
THE YALE COLLECTION OF AMERICAN LITERATURE, BEINECKE RARE BOOK AND MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY



model of middle-class decorum, playing the roles of two charmingly eccentric ladies who just happened to be married.

no men around her except homosexuals—her "feathered friends," as he called those he resented for usurping his place in the nest. Undeniably, there had been a change in the salon. Although Gertrude and Alice were as reserved as ever, they did live increasingly within a kind of tacit homosexual freemasonry. Indeed, it seems to have been that very reserve which was part of the attraction for such cautious Old World gentlemen as Frederick Ashton and Virgil Thomson and others from the highly sexually encoded worlds of music and theatre and dance. In Stein's new role as a professional collaborator writing opera and ballet librettos, and also as a friend, she seems to have developed the appeal of a more or less inverted Mae West: a good-humored woman in male drag, a warm and wise mama who not only took in all her gay sons but was gay herself.

None of which was known to the public, of course, when "The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas," written in 1932, suddenly turned the world's most famously obscure writer into the best-selling author of a Literary Guild selection. From the start, Stein had thought of the "Autobiography"—actually, it is her own biography, written from the dazzled point of view of her companion—as an embarrassingly traditional, money-making venture, on a different level from the meaningfully experimental work she still composed at night. In fact, this magical book doesn't resemble anything else in Stein's work—or, for that matter, anything else in American literature. Its only models seem to have been those other famed "Alice" books, by Lewis Carroll, and the social surrealism of Oscar Wilde, which further muddles the question of the sexual significance of a writer's style.



The book is a modern fairy tale: the story of a golden age of art in Paris, when geniuses regularly came to dinner and were cleverly seated opposite their own paintings, so that everyone was made especially happy, although everyone was happy anyway—this was back before death and divorce and success—and Henri Rousseau played the violin, and Marie Laurencin sang, and Frédéric of the Lapin Agile wandered in and out with his donkey. And into the middle of this wonderland walks the sensible American Alice B. At her very first dinner, she finds herself next to Picasso, who gravely asks her to tell him whether she thinks he really does look like her President Lincoln. "I had thought a good many things that evening," she reports quite as gravely, "but I had not thought that." Ever temperate, Alice is the quiet but quizzical eye at the heart of the storm. Her equanimity, like her pleasure, is absolute. The book indulges in some small revenge—Leo is not mentioned by name, Hemingway is imputed to be a coward—and it leaves us with a sense of loss that is as profound as it is muted. Once, there was so much life all around that one had to hurry to bed before dawn to have any hope of sleep: "There were birds in many trees behind high walls in those days, now there are fewer."

With the book's success, Stein fell into a profound depression. Even her new *gloire* didn't help, at first: she was fifty-nine, she was having her first major success, and it was for the wrong thing. In "Four in America," a particularly reader-resistant work that she completed about this time, she rose—briefly, rather thrillingly—to a clear explanation of her intended goals and values:

> Now listen! Can't you see that when the language was new—as it was with Chaucer and Homer—the poet could use the name of a thing and the thing was really there? He could say "O moon," "O sea," "O love," and the moon and the sea and love were really there. And can't you see that after hundreds of years had gone by and thousands of poems had been written, he could call on those words and find that they were just wornout literary words?...
>
> Now listen! I'm no fool. I know that in daily life we don't go around saying "is a . . . is a . . . is a . . ." Yes, I'm no fool; but I think that in that line the rose is red for the first time in English poetry for a hundred years.

Alas for good intentions. When Stein returned to America for the first time in thirty years, in 1934, to attend a performance of Virgil Thomson's opera (to her libretto) "Four Saints in Three Acts," she also gave a series of lectures around the country. Directly exhorting her audience, Stein made headlines ("Miss Stein Speaks to Bewildered 500") but clearly failed to win the understanding she was after. The work of the woman who claimed to believe so fervently in the immediacy of language and the recovery of meaning remained synonymous with obscurity and confusion. (In the 1935 movie "Top Hat," Ginger Rogers giggled that an indecipherable telegram "sounds like Gertrude Stein.") The new Library of America edition raises many old questions—not only about Stein's judgment and credibility but about the relationship of theory to art in the troubled history of modernism.

When Stein and Toklas returned to Paris, in the spring of 1935, Toklas took it upon herself to ship copies of Stein's manuscripts back to America. This was the full extent of their preparations for the possibility of hard times ahead in Europe. Stein couldn't believe that anything would really happen, and certainly not to them—two elderly Jewish ladies with a bit of fame and no political interests. Their political indifference was now dangerously compounded by Stein's long-standing way of handling all serious unpleasantness: pretend it isn't there, and then tumble into nonsense or baby talk, so that perhaps it will be persuaded that you are not there, either—or, at least, that you are not a reasonable target. In her early Paris days, she had written to a friend who had apparently mentioned the Russian pogroms against the Jews, "The Russians is very bad people and the Czar a very bad man." In the mid-thirties, her thoughts about Hitler were hardly more sophisticated. She and Alice were staying in the countryside, at Bilignin, in 1939, when war broke out. They hurried to Paris in order to close up their apartment. Then, taking one Cézanne and Gertrude's Picasso portrait, they returned—against all advice—to Bilignin, which soon fell under the jurisdiction of Vichy. And there they spent the war.

How did they survive? Largely, it seems, through a French admirer and friend who was appointed head of the Bibliothèque Nationale under the Occupation, and issued several requests that they not be disturbed. They lived quietly and scrounged for food; they sold the Cézanne and liked to tell visitors surprised at the quality of their dinner that they were eating it. They watched the German Army march into the countryside and, a long and burning time later, straggle out; German soldiers were billeted for a time in their house, as were American G.I.s when at last they arrived. This experience is recounted clearly and movingly in a book that Stein completed in 1944, entitled "Wars I Have Seen." Sadly, the book is out of print and has not been included in the Library of America edition. It is one of the few of Stein's works that one might call essential, because it tells the ending of the fairy tale.

There is much here that is richly, lovingly observed, about the women's daily life and that of their neighbors and about French pragmatism and courage. Typically, whatever could not be lovingly observed is passed over—or nearly so. For history almost catches up with Gertrude Stein and forces her into confrontation. One feels her struggling with the effort not to look away: the very term "collabo"—which is all she manages to spit out of the word—causes her to stumble on the page, falling into a repetitive stutter that seems not a mannerism but a kind of seizure. Her attempt to address anti-Semitism begins with an early memory of the Dreyfus Affair, but she hasn't advanced beyond a sentence when she segues into senseless babble: "He can read acasias, hands and faces. Acasias are for the goat." "Acasia" is not even a word (and Stein never made up words; she thought such idiocy to be the province of Joyce). "Acacia" is the name of a tree, but "aphasia" means the loss of the ability to speak. It is as though Stein were making her own diagnosis, or as though a part of her reason were watching the rest of her mind run away.

After the war, back in Paris, the famous salon was filled with G.I.s eating Alice's chocolate ice cream. Gertrude wrote down what they said and how they said it as if they were the new poets of the age. She adored them, she celebrated them: they were, after all, young men and heroes. But something in her attitude was changing. Along with the ice cream, she dispensed correction; she worried that the great liberators were taken in by the flattery and the politeness of the postwar Germans, or that they saw the world in terms of movies. By and large, it seems to have dawned on her that there was a lot these callow demigods ought to learn before the world was put in the hands of men, even the best and noblest men, ever again.

TUNED IN,
TURNED ON,
DROPPED OUT,
DROPPED IN,
WORKED OUT,
SAVED UP,
DROPPED DEAD.

• •

Although she was over seventy and was weak with cancer, Stein was very eager to work. In late 1945, she began a second opera project with her old friend Virgil Thomson. It was his idea that the setting be the American nineteenth century; it was her idea that the hero be a heroine, the suffragist Susan B. Anthony. Stein completed the libretto for "The Mother of Us All" just before her death, in July of 1946. Although the work is predictably baffling, Stein maintains an exceptionally strong dramatic focus on the character of Susan B. She had done a considerable amount of historical research—shocking in itself, given her usual methods—and it is Anthony's public concerns that dominate the text: the disparities between the sexes, and her passionate conviction that women are stronger and must lead.

For men are afraid, Stein's heroine observes: "They fear women, they fear each other, they fear their neighbor, they fear other countries and then they hearten themselves in their fear by crowding together and following each other, and when they crowd together and follow each other they are brutes, like animals who stampede." As for women, they are afraid not for themselves but only for their children: "That is the real difference between men and women." Stein shows Susan B. at the end of her life, when she knows that all her work has failed. She has helped to win the vote for black men, but she will die before it is granted to women, white or black. When someone attempts to comfort her by saying that women will vote someday, her despair only deepens: she dreads that when women have the vote they, too, will become afraid—that they will become like men.

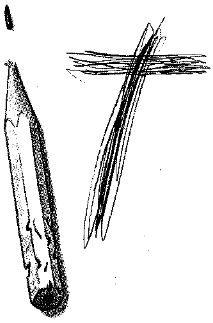
How astonishing that Stein can now voice her lifelong wish—that "women will become like men"—as a dreaded possibility. A new sense of the value of what women have traditionally done and been may even have given her succor in these last months, as she looked back on her own life as the mother of so much and so many. Perhaps by then she had realized that in her years of giving and feeding and advising and encouraging and (is there another word for it?) mothering—in the continual dispersal of herself to men whom she loved and admired, to geniuses and soldiers and cowards alike—she had inadvertently lived the life of the most profoundly womanly of women, and that it had been good. ♦

FICTION

INTIMACY

Why do so many fathers abandon their families?

BY HANIF KUREISHI



IT IS the saddest night, for I am leaving and not coming back. Tomorrow morning, when the woman I have lived with for six years has gone to work on her bicycle, and our children have been taken to the park with their ball, I will pack some things into a suitcase, slip out of my house, and take the tube to Victor's place. There I will sleep on the floor in a tiny room next to the kitchen. Each morning I will heave the thin single mattress back into the airing cupboard and stuff the musty duvet into a box and replace the cushions on the sofa.

I will not be returning to this life. I cannot. Perhaps I should leave a note. "Dear Susan, I am not coming back. . . ." Perhaps it would be better to ring tomorrow afternoon. Or I could visit at the weekend. The details I haven't decided. I will not tell her this evening. I will put it off. Why? Because words make things happen. Once they are out, you cannot put them back. I am trembling, and have been all afternoon, all day.

This, then, could be our last evening as an innocent, complete family; my last night with a woman I know almost everything about and want no more of. Soon we will be like strangers. No, we can never be that. Hurting someone is an act of reluctant intimacy. We will be dangerous acquaintances with a history.

I perch on the edge of the bath and watch my sons, aged five and three. Their toys float on the surface, and they chatter. They are ebullient and fierce, and people say what happy and affectionate children they are. This morning, before I set out for the day, the elder boy, insisting on another kiss before I closed the door, said, "Daddy, I love everyone."

Tomorrow I will damage and scar them.

The younger boy was wearing chinos, a gray shirt, blue braces, and a policeman's helmet. As I toss the clothes in the washing basket, I am disturbed by a sound outside. I hold my breath.

Already!

She is pushing her bicycle into the hall. She is removing the shopping bags from the basket.

During the last few days, I have been trying to convince myself that leaving someone isn't the worst thing you can do to a person. It doesn't have to be a tragedy. If you never left anything or anyone, there would be no room for the new. Naturally, to move on is an act of infidelity—to others, to the past, to old notions of yourself. Perhaps every day should contain at least one essential infidelity. It would be an optimistic, hopeful act, guaranteeing belief in the future—a declaration that things can be not only different but better.

EIGHT years ago my friend Victor left his wife. Since then he has had only unsatisfactory loves, including the Chinese prostitute who played the piano naked and brought all her belongings to their assignations. If the phone rings he does a kind of panicky dance, wondering what new opprobrium may be on the way. Victor has always given women hope, if not satisfaction.

Susan is in the room now.

She says, "Why don't you ever shut the bathroom door?"

"What?"

"Why don't you?"

I can't think of a reason.

She kisses the children. When we really talk, it is about them—something they said or did.

She presents her cheek a few inches from my lips, so that to kiss her I must lean forward. She smells of perfume and the street. She goes to change and returns in jeans and sweatshirt with a glass of wine for each of us.

"Hallo. How are you?"

She looks at me hard, in order to have me notice her. I feel my body contract. I smile. Does she notice anything different in my face today? Usually, before seeing her, I prepare two or three possible subjects, as if our conversations were examinations. Today I have been too feverish to rehearse. She accuses me of being silent. But silence, like darkness, can be an act of kindness; it, too, is a language.

THE boys' bathwater drains away slowly—their toys impede the plughole. They won't move until the water is gone, and then they sit there making mustaches and hats with the remaining bubbles. Eventually, I lift the younger one out. Susan takes the other.

We wrap them in thick hooded towels. With damp hair and beads of water on their necks, the boys look like diminutive boxers after a fight. They argue about what pajamas they want to wear. The younger one will only wear a Batman T-shirt. They seem to have become self-conscious at an early age. They must have got it from us.

Susan gives the younger boy a bottle, which he holds up to his mouth two-handedly, like a trumpeter. I watch her caressing his hair, kissing his dimpled fingers, and rubbing his stomach. He giggles and squirms. What a quality of innocence people have when they don't expect to be harmed. Who could violate it without damaging himself?

We take the children downstairs, where they lie on cushions, nonchalantly sucking their pacifiers, watching "The Wizard of Oz" with their eyes half open. They look like a couple of swells smoking cigars in a field on a hot day. They demand ginger biscuits. I fetch them from the kitchen without Susan's noticing me. The boys extend their greedy fingers but don't look away from the TV. After a while, I pick up the crumbs and, having considered what to do with them, fling them into a corner.

FILIP PAGOWSKI

Susan works in the kitchen, listening to the radio. Her own family life, like mine, has mostly been unpleasant. Now she goes to a lot of trouble to make good meals. Even if we're having a takeaway, she won't let us eat in a slew of newspapers and children's books. She puts out napkins and a bottle of wine, and lights candles, insisting we have a proper family meal, including nervy silences and severe arguments.

I sit on the floor near the boys and examine them, their feet, ears, eyes. This evening, when I am both here and not here—almost a ghost already—I want to be aware of everything, I want a mental picture that I can carry around and refer to when I am at Victor's place. It will be the first of the few things I must, tonight, choose to take with me.

THE boys have fallen asleep. I carry them upstairs, one by one. They lie side by side under vivid duvets. I am about to kiss them when I notice their eyes are open. I dread a second wind.

"If you lie still I will read to you," I say.

They regard me suspiciously, but I find a book and make a place between them. They stretch out across me, occasionally kicking each other.

It is a cruel story, as most children's stories are, and it involves a woodcutter. But it also concerns a conventional family, from which the father has not fled. The boys know the story so well they can tell when I skip a bit or attempt to make something up. When they stop asking questions I put the book down, creep out of the room, and switch off the light, then return to find their faces in the covers and kiss them. Outside I listen for their breathing. If only I could stand here all night. Then I hear them whispering to one another and giggling.

Old wives; old story.

I ALWAYS look at women—in shops, on the street, in the bus, at parties—and wonder what it might be like to be with one of them. I imagine that with each woman I could be a different person for a time. There would be no past. I could keep the world outside my skin, huddled up with a whispering woman who wanted me.

But now I am not sure that I can touch a woman as I used to—frivolously. After a certain age, sex is no longer casual. To lay your hand on another's body, or to put your mouth against another's—what a commitment that is! Your whole life is uncovered.

Maybe that is what happened with Nina. One day a girl walked past and I wanted her. I've examined the moment a score of times. She and I go over it repeatedly, in joy and puzzlement. I can remember how tall and slim she appeared; and then there was a jolt, a violent jolt, when we met. Something about her changed everything. She was from another world.

My young gay friend Ian liked to stand with me outside tube stations, where I would watch the flocks of girls in the summer and he would watch the boys. Looks would be exchanged between him and a stranger and off he would go, while I waited, having coffee somewhere. Sometimes he fucked five people in a day.

"I've never understood all the fuss you straights make about infidelity," he'd say. "It's only fucking."

SUSAN has already laid the table. I open the wine and pour it. The man in the off-license said it is an easy wine to drink. These days I find anything easy to drink.

Susan brings the food in and sets it down. I glance over the newspaper. As she eats, she turns on the TV, puts on her glasses, and leans forward to watch a soap opera.

"Oh my God," she says, as something happens.

The noise presses into my head. I have begun to hate television.

After we clear up, Susan sits at the table, writing invitations for the boys' party. Then, making a shopping list for next week, she says, "What meals do you fancy?"

"I don't want to think about it now."

"What's your favorite ice-cream flavor at the moment? Is it the nut crunch or the vanilla?"

"I don't know."

She says, "It's not like you to be unable to think of food."

"No."

I consider how well I know her. The way she puts her head to one side, and the grimace she makes when concentrating. She looks as she must have as an eleven-year-old taking an exam. No doubt she will have a similar look at seventy, her gestures unchanged, writing a letter to one of our sons.

I imagine her as a teen-ager, getting up early to study, and then preparing for school—making her sandwiches, leaving the house while her parents sleep. She got herself into Cambridge, where she insured that she knew the most luminous people. She is as deliberate in her friendships as she is in everything else.

She is effective and organized. Our fridges and freezers are full of soup, vegetables, wine, cheese, and ice cream; the flowers and bushes in the garden are labelled; the children's clothes are washed, ironed, and folded. Every day there are deliveries of newspapers, books, alcohol, food, and, often, of furniture. Our front path is a thoroughfare for the service industries.

There are also people who come to clean the house, tend the garden, and cut the trees, as well as nannies, babysitters, and au pairs, not to mention masseurs, decorators, acupuncturists, piano teachers, the occasional drug dealer, and people to organize all of the above. Chalked on a board are instructions for the week. Susan is always thinking of how to improve things. She will have strong, considered opinions on the latest films and music. In bed she reads cookbooks.

I am from the lower middle class and from the suburbs, where poverty and pretension go together, and so I can see now how good the middle class has it—their separate, sealed world. They keep quiet about it, with reason. They feel guilty, too, but they insure that they have the best of everything.

IT wasn't Susan's wit or beauty that attracted me. There was never great passion—perhaps that was the point. I liked her humdrum dexterity and ability to cope. She wasn't helpless before the world. I envy her capability, and wish I had half of it.

At the office Susan is too prudent to want power, but she is clear and articulate, and it is not difficult for her to make less confident people feel ineffectual. After all, she is cleverer than her colleagues, and has worked harder. Like many girls brought up to be good and well behaved, she likes to please. Perhaps that is why young women are so suitable for the contemporary

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working world. They are welcome to it.

The range of her feeling is narrow; she would consider it shameful to give way to her moods. Therefore she keeps most of herself out of view. I would say this odd thing: Because she has never been disillusioned or disappointed, her life has never appalled her. She has never lapsed into inner chaos.

"Sorry?" I say.

Susan is speaking—asking me to get my diary.

"Why?" I say.

"Why? Just do it, if you don't mind."

"Don't speak to me like that."

"I'm too tired for a negotiation. The children wake at six. I have to spend the day at work. What do you do in the afternoons? I expect you sleep then!"

I say, "You're not too tired to raise your voice."

"It's the only way I can get you to do anything."

"No, it's not."

"You exhaust me."

I could strike her. She would know then. I am about to say, "Susan, can't you see that, of all the nights we have spent together, this is the last one—the last one of all?"

My anger, usually contained, can be cruel and vengeful. But this should be satisfying: I don't want to discover tonight that Susan and I really are suited.

I murmur, "All right, all right, I'll do it."

"At last."

Sometimes I go along with what Susan wants, but in an absurd parodic way, hoping she will see how foolish I find her. But she doesn't see it and, much to my annoyance, my coöperation pleases her.

I sit in front of her with my diary, flipping through the pages. After today the pages are blank.

She says how much she is looking forward to the weekend away that we have planned. We will stay at the country hotel we visited several years ago, when she was first pregnant. The weather was warm. I rowed her on a lake. We ate mussels and read the papers on the beach. It will be just us, without the children.

"The rest will do us good," she says. "I know things have been fraught."

"Do you think so?"

"You are gloomy and don't try. But . . . we can discuss things."

"What things?"

She says, "All this." Her hands flail. "I think we need to." She controls herself. "You used to be such an affectionate man." She reminds me that there are historic walks and castles in the vicinity of the country hotel. "And, please," she says, "will you remember to take your camera this time?"

"I'll try to."

"You don't want any photographs of me, do you?"

"Sometimes I do."

"No you don't. You never offer."

"No, I don't offer."

"That's horrible. You should have one on your desk, as I do, of you."

I say, "I'm not interested in photography. And you're not as vain as I am."

"That's true."

I pace up and down with my drink, agitatedly. She takes no notice.

Fear is something I recognize. My childhood still tastes of fear. Fear of parents, aunts, and uncles, of vicars, police, and teachers, and of being kicked, abused, and insulted by other children. The fear of getting into trouble, of being discovered, castigated, smacked, ignored, locked in, locked out. There is, too, the fear of your own anger, of retaliation and of annihilation, as well as the fear of who you might become. It isn't surprising that you become accustomed to doing what you are told while making a safe place inside yourself and living a secret life.

"By the way," she says, "Victor rang."

"Oh yes? Any message?"

"He wanted to know when you are coming." She looks at me.

"O.K.," I say. "Thank you."

After a bit she says, "Why don't you see more people? I mean proper people, not just Victor."

"I can't bear the distraction," I say. "My internal life is too busy."

"I can't imagine what you have to think about," she says. Then she laughs. "You didn't eat much. Your trousers are baggy. They're always falling down."

"Sorry."

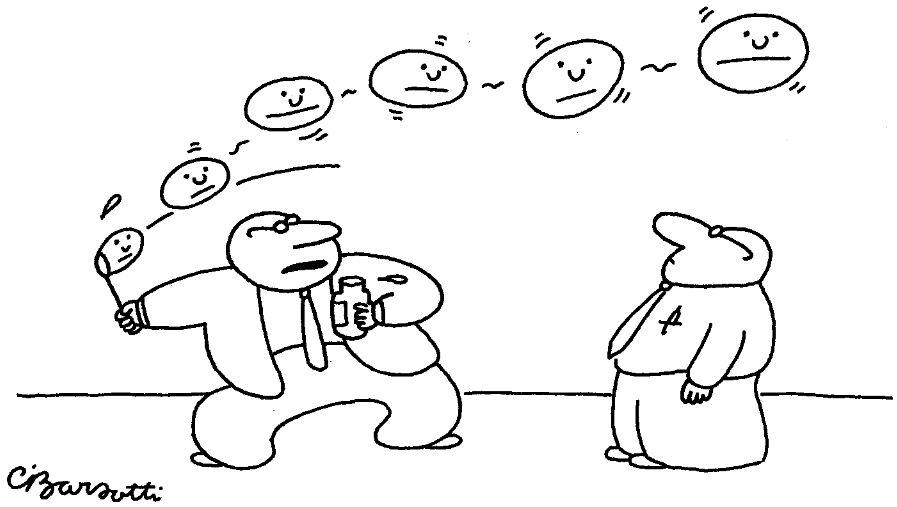
"Sorry? Don't say sorry. You sound pathetic." She grunts. After a few moments she gets up.

"Put the dishes in the machine," she says. "Don't just leave them on the side for me to clear up."

"I'll put them in the machine when I'm ready."

"That means never." Then she says, "Are you coming upstairs?"

I look at her searchingly and with interest, wondering if she means sex—it



"So how many temps do you need?"

• •

must be more than a month since we've fucked—or whether she intends us to read. I like books, but I don't want to get undressed for one.

"In a while," I say.

"You are so restless."

"Am I?"

"It's your age."

"It must be that."

I FIND myself thinking of the last time I saw Asif. He doesn't often come into the city; the rush and uproar make his head whirl. But when he and I have an "old friends" lunch I insist he meet me in the center of town. I take him to clamorous places where there will be fashionable young women in close-fitting items.

"What a picture gallery you have brought me to!" he says, rubbing his hands. "Is this how you spend your life?"

"Oh yes."

I indicate their attributes and inform him that they prefer mature men.

"Are you sure?" he says. "Have you tried them all?"

"I'm going to. Champagne?"

Our talk is of books and politics, and of mutual university friends. At university he was the brightest of our year, and was considered something of a martyr for becoming a teacher. Soon after finals he and Najma married.

I get him to confess that he wonders what another body might feel like. But then he imagines his wife's putting out flowers as she waits for him. He says he sees her across the bed in her negligee, three children sleeping between them.

I recall him describing how much he enjoys sucking her cunt, grunting and slurping down there for hours, after all this time. They massage each other's feet with coconut oil. In the conservatory their chairs face each other. When they are not discussing their children or questions of the day, they read Christina Rossetti aloud.

A few months ago I asked him to tell Susan that I had been with him when I had been with Nina.

He was dismayed.

"But don't ask me to do that."

"What?"

"Lie for you," he said.

"Aren't we friends?" I said. "It's a sensible lie. Susan doubts me. It is making her unhappy."

He shook his head. "You are too used to having your own way. You are making her unhappy."

"I am interested in someone else," I said.

I told him little of my relationships with women; he imagined such fabulous liaisons that I didn't want to disillusion him. He said to me once, "You remind me of someone who reads only the first chapter of a book. You never discover what happens next."

"How old is she?" he asked.

There was a discernible look of repulsion on his face, as if he were trying to swallow sour milk.

"It's only sex, then."

"There is that," I said.

"But marriage is a battle, a terrible journey, a season in Hell, and a reason for living. You need to be equipped in all areas, not just the sexual."

"Yes," I said, dully. "I know."

Oh to be equipped in all areas.

Asif's favorite opera is "Don Giovanni,"

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and “Anna Karenina” and “Madame Bovary” are his favorite novels. Testaments of fire and betrayal. But people don't want you to have too much pleasure; you might start wanting it all the time. Desire is naughty. It mocks all human endeavor (and makes it worthwhile).

Once I tried out on Asif the idea of my leaving Susan.

“I can just about see why someone might leave their spouse,” he said. “But I can't understand how someone could leave their children.”

It is the men who must go. They are blamed for it, as I will be.

COMFORTABLE chairs, old carpets, yards of books, many pictures, and piles of CDs: my study. I've always had a room like this. I take my weekend bag from the cupboard and open it. I stare into the bottom. What do you take when you're never coming back? I throw a book into the bag—something by Strindberg—and then replace the book on the shelf.

I stand here for ages. I am afraid of getting too comfortable in my own house, afraid that once I sit down I will lose my resolve. Above my desk is the shelf on which I keep my prizes and awards. Susan says it makes the place look like a dentist's waiting room.

An inventory, perhaps.

The desk—which my parents bought me when I was taking my A-levels—I have lugged around from shared houses to council flats, until it ended up here, the first property I have owned. A significant decision, getting a mortgage. It was as if you would never be able to move again.

I'll leave the desk for the boys. And the books?

Fuck it, I will leave everything here. My sons, wandering in this forsaken room, will discover, perhaps by mistake, the treasures they need.

After school or college, in my bedroom, I used to pile up Father's classical records on the spindle of my record-player, and the symphonies would clatter down, one by one, until supper. In those days it was rebellious for someone my age to like music that didn't sound better the louder it was played.

Then, surrounded by my father's books, I would reach up and pull down a few volumes. Father, like the other neighborhood men, spent most of his day in unsatisfying work. Time was precious and he had me fear its waste.

I will regret forfeiting this room.

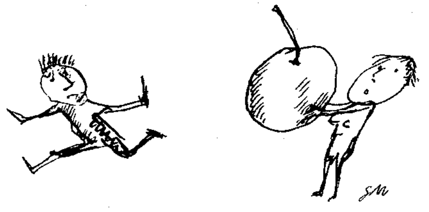
I know how necessary fathers are for boys. I would hang on to Dad's hand as he toured the bookshops, climbing ladders to pull down rotting tomes. “Let's go, let's go,” I'd say.

The writers Dad preferred are still my favorites, mostly nineteenth-century Europeans, the Russians in particular. The characters—Goriot, Vronsky, Mme. Ranevskaya, Nana, Julien Sorel—feel part of me. It is Father's copies I will give to the boys. Father took me to see war films and cricket. Whenever I appeared in his room his face would brighten. He loved kissing me. He, more than anyone, was the person I wanted to marry. I wanted to walk, talk, laugh, and dress like him. My sons are the same with me, repeating my phrases in their tiny voices, staring admiringly at me and fighting to sit beside me. But I am leaving them. What would Father think of that?

Six years dead, he would have been horrified by my skulking off. It would have been undignified. Susan used to go to him when we fought and he would take her side, phoning me and saying, “Don't be cruel, boy.” He said she had everything I could want. He didn't approve of leaving. He believed in loyalty.

Father was a civil servant who later worked as a clerk at Scotland Yard, for the police. In the mornings, he wrote novels. He must have completed five or six. A couple of them were admired by publishers, but none of them got into print. They weren't very bad and they weren't very good. He never gave up; it was all he ever wanted to do. The book on his bedside table had a picture of a middle-aged writer sitting on a pile of books, a portable typewriter on his knees. It was “Call It Experience,” by Erskine Caldwell. Under the author's name it said, “Reveals the secrets of a great writer's private life and literary success.” The writer did look experienced; he had been around. He was tough. That's what a writer was.

Failure strengthened Father's resolve. He was both brave and foolish. He wanted me to be a doctor, and I did consider it, but in the end he told me it was hopeless to take up something that wasn't going to please me. He was wise in that way. I was successful as a writer a couple of years after I left university. I could do it; I just could. Whether it was a knack or trick or talent, I didn't know. It puzzled both of us. Art is easy for those who can do it and impossible for those who can't.



What did Father's life show me? That life is a struggle, and that struggle gets you nowhere. That there is little pleasure in marriage; that it is like doing a job one hates. You can't leave and you can't enjoy it. Both he and Mother were frustrated, neither being able to find a way to get what they wanted. Nevertheless, they were loyal and faithful to each other. Disloyal and unfaithful to themselves. Or do I misunderstand?

Separation wouldn't have occurred to a lower-middle-class couple in the fifties. My parents remained in the same house all their lives. When we were older, money was short. Father refused to look for a better job and wouldn't move to a different part of the country. Nothing was allowed to happen until he “made it.” Mother was forced to find employment. She was a school dinner lady; she worked in factories and offices; she worked in a shop.

The day I left home, my parents sat in separate armchairs, watching me carry out my records. What was there left for them to do?

But once I had gone my parents started going to art galleries, to the cinema, for walks, and on long holidays. They took a new interest in each other and couldn't get enough of life. Victor says that once the lights on a love have dimmed, you can never illuminate them again, any more than you can reheat a soufflé. But my parents went through the darkness and discovered a new intimacy.

I TURN out the lights and find myself climbing the stairs to the bedroom. What am I doing? If this is my last night here, hadn't I better get packed and ready? I leave the light on in the hall. I step into our bedroom.

It's been weeks since we fucked. I've stopped approaching Susan in that way, to see if she desires me. I have waited for a flicker of interest. I am a dog under the table, hoping for a biscuit.

Without removing my clothes I lie down. Yellow light streaks the room from the street lamp opposite, a harsh, sickly color, reminding me of the smell of gas. I look at the ceiling where the roof has been leaking.

I am getting warm and dozy. The bed is comfortable. The house is silent; the children sheltered, healthy, and asleep.

Susan stirs.

I stroke her back. I am convinced she can feel my thoughts. If she wakes up, puts out her arms, and says she loves me, I will sink back into the pillow and never leave. But she has never done such a thing. Sensing my fingers on her, she moves away, pulling up the covers.

I rub myself through my jeans. I wish I had someone to do this. Not everything can be achieved alone. I won't do it here. Susan is offended by my solo efforts. She is of a disapproving generation of women. She thinks she's a feminist but she's just bad-tempered.

Nina encouraged me to masturbate on her back, stomach, or feet while she slept. She liked me to do it before she rushed off, to have me on her on the tube.

I want Nina, but then I always want Nina when I have an erection. I raise myself quietly and tiptoe to the bathroom.

I push down my trousers and look for a suitable lubricant. The last time I did this, when Susan had some friends round for dinner, I used my children's shampoo, and felt as if a wasp had been pushed into my urethra. I find a greenish cream in the cupboard. It's anti-aging unguent. God knows how much Susan has spent on this pig fat. Catching me once using it as hand cream, she became incensed. Maybe if I apply this every day to my prick it'll become fourteen again.

I stick my penis in it.

What if I met Susan now, for the first time, at a party? I would look at her twice, but not three times. It is likely that I would want to talk to her. Fearing those she can't seduce, she can be over-attentive to certain men, looking at them with what I call "the enraptured gaze," until they wonder why she wants to appeal to their vanity rather than their intelligence. I should have gone out with her for six months. Or maybe a one-night stand. But I wasn't ruthless enough, and I didn't know what I wanted.

I sort through the laundry basket and extract a pair of Susan's knickers, pulling them from her tights and laying them on the sink. Here we go. No; the gray knickers lack the je ne sais quoi. The white might do the trick.

I run through my library of stimulating scenes. Which one will I replay—

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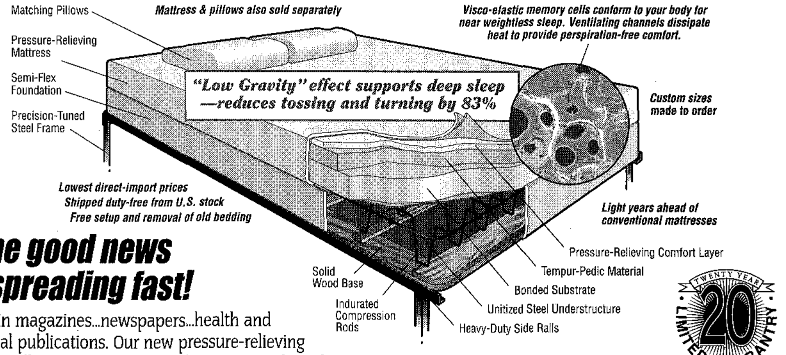
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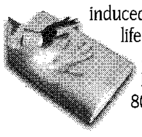

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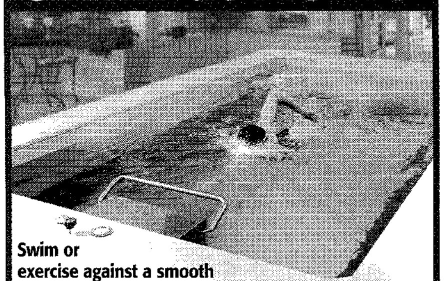

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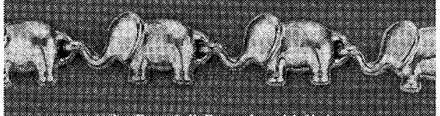

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the time in Berlin or the middle-aged Italian who wept? What about the girl who rode her bicycle knickerless? In the old days I had possible scenes—scenes that might actually occur—which I used as an aid, rather than this nostalgia. And then, by mistake, I glance into the mirror and see a gray-haired, grimacing, mad-eyed monkey with a fist in front of him (his other hand placed delicately on his side because his back hurts from lifting the children). I suddenly feel that I am more likely to weep than ejaculate.

I will think of Nina. Nina's face; then the way she turns over and offers her arse to me. That should do it.

Suddenly I hear a noise. Quickly I close my pants. The bathroom door is pushed open, as if by a ghost. I watch and listen.

FROM the darkness of the hall, a child's luminous pacifier bobs into the room, a tiny circle of green light. The boy's eyes are shut as he stands there in his Batman T-shirt, pajama bottoms, and furry slippers, three years old. Actually, he is asleep. He staggers suddenly, and automatically raises his arms as if he has scored a goal. My hands fit under his arms, I pull him up along my body, and smell and kiss his hair.

"What are you doing here, my beautiful boy?"

I carry him downstairs, lay him on the sofa, and pull off his bottoms and soggy nappy. The smell is unpleasantly sharp and familiar at the same time; it is him. He is willful and keeps trying to turn over, so I place one hand on the middle of his chest and push down while grasping his ankles with the other, as if I were about to hang him upside down from a hook. He thrashes and blinks as I wipe him. Then I shove and push to get the nappy in the right position. It is like trying to change the tire of a moving car. At last I replace his pajama bottoms.

"Have I been good enough to you, little boy?"

I didn't enjoy him as a baby, dreading the crying and whinging, the refusal to get dressed, eat, or go to sleep. I was astonished how whole days would pass when there was no time for anything but him, not even in the evenings. Having considered several books on the upbringing of children, often with feces or vomit on my fingers, I once threw him backward into his cot, hitting his head. I put brandy in his milk. I booted him hard up the nappy before he was even walking.

Susan cut me out, keeping the babies and the competence to herself, her female friends, and her mother. It has been only in the past few months that I've made myself useful. And only recently that I have fallen in love with my son. Now the boy and I talk ceaselessly. Where does the light go at night, what do spiders eat, why do women have "bosoms," where do people go when they die, and why do they have eyebrows? Where will he get the answers when I'm not here?

I am leaving this woman alone with two young children. My presence, however baleful, has perhaps reassured her. Now she will work, buy their clothes, feed them, tend them when they are sick. I'm sure she will ask herself, if she hasn't already, what men are for. Do they serve any useful function? They impregnate women. Occasionally they send money. What else could fathers be? It wasn't a question Dad asked himself. Being a father wasn't a question then. He was there to impose himself, to guide, exert discipline, and enjoy his children. We had to appreciate who he was and see things as he did.

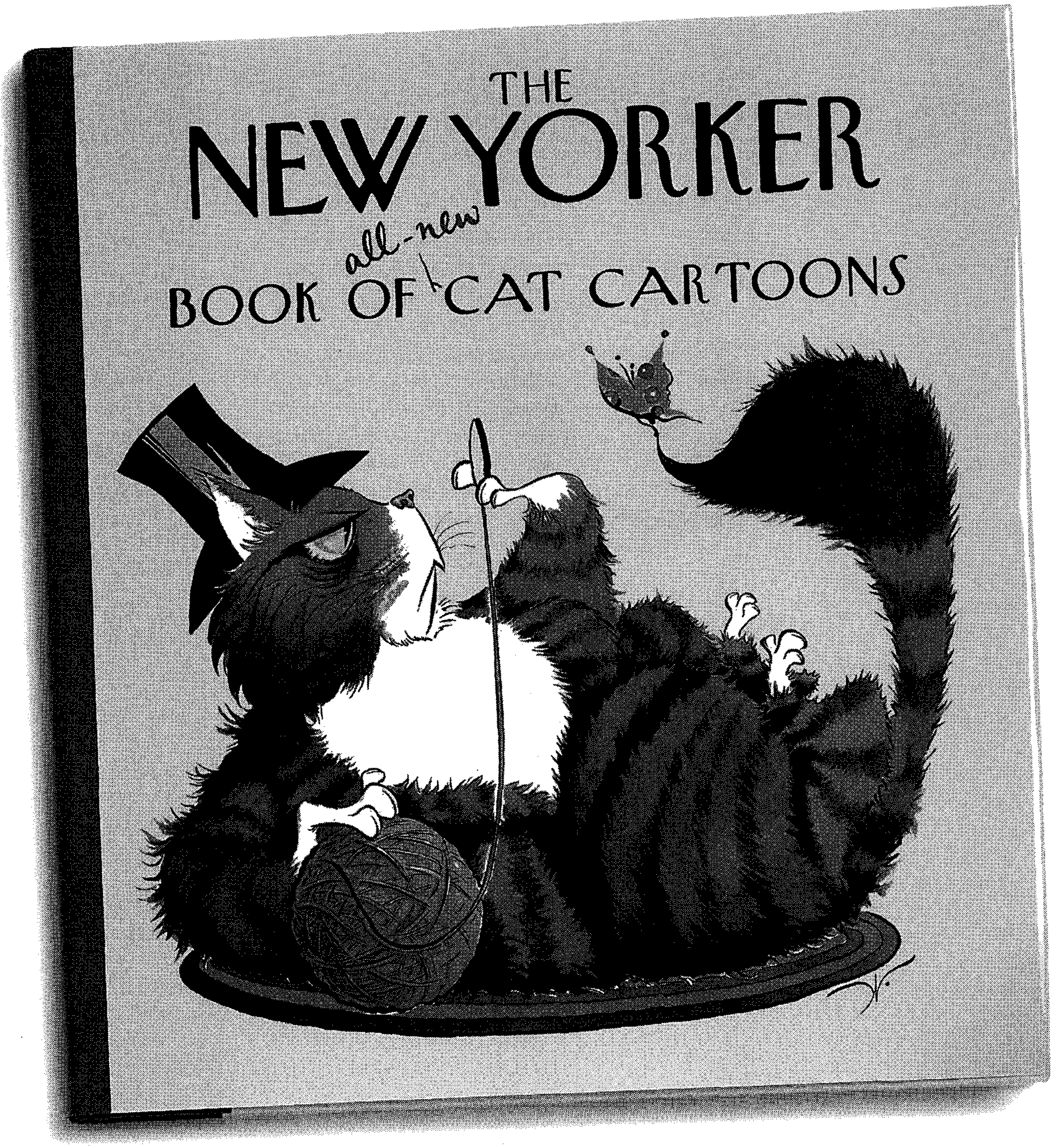
I PICK up my son. Holding his head with one hand and supporting his back with the other—his eyes are closed and his mouth open—I carry him to bed. But as I am about to lay him down I have a strange feeling. Sometimes you look into a mirror and can't always remember what age you are. Somehow you expect to see a twelve-year-old or an eighteen-year-old looking back at you. Now I feel as if I am looking at myself. He is me; I am him; both of us are part of one another but separate in the world. For now it is myself I am carrying in my arms.

I lay him down and cover him up.

I wonder when I will sleep beside him again. He has a vicious kick and a tendency, at unexpected moments, to vomit in my hair. But he can pat and stroke my face like a lover. His affectionate words and little voice are God's breath to me.

I creep down the stairs. I put my jacket on. I find my keys. I get to the door and open it. I step out of the house. It is dark and cold. The fresh wind sweeps through me. It invigorates me.

Go. You must go. ♦



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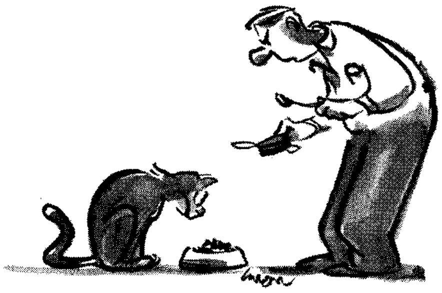

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BOOKS

RICH MAN, RICHER MAN

Behind the comparisons between John D. Rockefeller, Sr., and Bill Gates.

BY JOHN CASSIDY

WHEN Bill Gates, the chairman of Microsoft, appeared before the Senate Judiciary Committee recently, a *Times* editorial writer compared the event to the famous hearings a century ago involving John D. Rockefeller, Sr., and Standard Oil, the giant trust that he founded and that, at one time, refined almost nine out of every ten barrels of oil pumped from the American earth. It wasn't the first time that Gates and Rockefeller had been set side by side. A few months ago, Gary Reback, a Silicon Valley lawyer who works for several of Microsoft's rivals, declared, "The only thing that Rockefeller did that Bill Gates hasn't done is use dynamite against his competitors." That was hyperbole—the allegation that Standard Oil agents blew up a rival refinery has never been proved—but there are at least some parallels between the two targets of Reback's venom: both Rockefeller and Gates were self-made men who created companies that dominated major industries; both became almost unimaginably rich; both inspired admiration and loathing in about equal measure; and both irked the Justice Department.

Rockefeller irked it a lot. In May of 1911, the Supreme Court forced Standard Oil to split itself up into thirty-four companies, thereby enshrining the principle that, even in a country like the United States, there are limits to the commercial power one man can legitimately accumulate. Compared with the pitched battle over Standard Oil, the current legal dispute between the Justice Department and Microsoft is a barroom brawl. The government says that Gates cannot legally integrate an Internet browser into his Windows 95 operating system; Gates claims that he can. This may be only the warmup, though. Joel Klein, the Assistant Attorney General in charge of the antitrust division, is considering a much broader case against Microsoft, under the Sherman Antitrust Act of 1890, the same statute that Teddy Roosevelt used to dismember Standard Oil. Legal experts are divided about the Justice Department's chances of success in an action of this type, but one thing is sure: the Microsoft dispute will define Washington's attitude toward monopolies in the twenty-first century in much the same way that the Standard Oil case did at the beginning of this one.

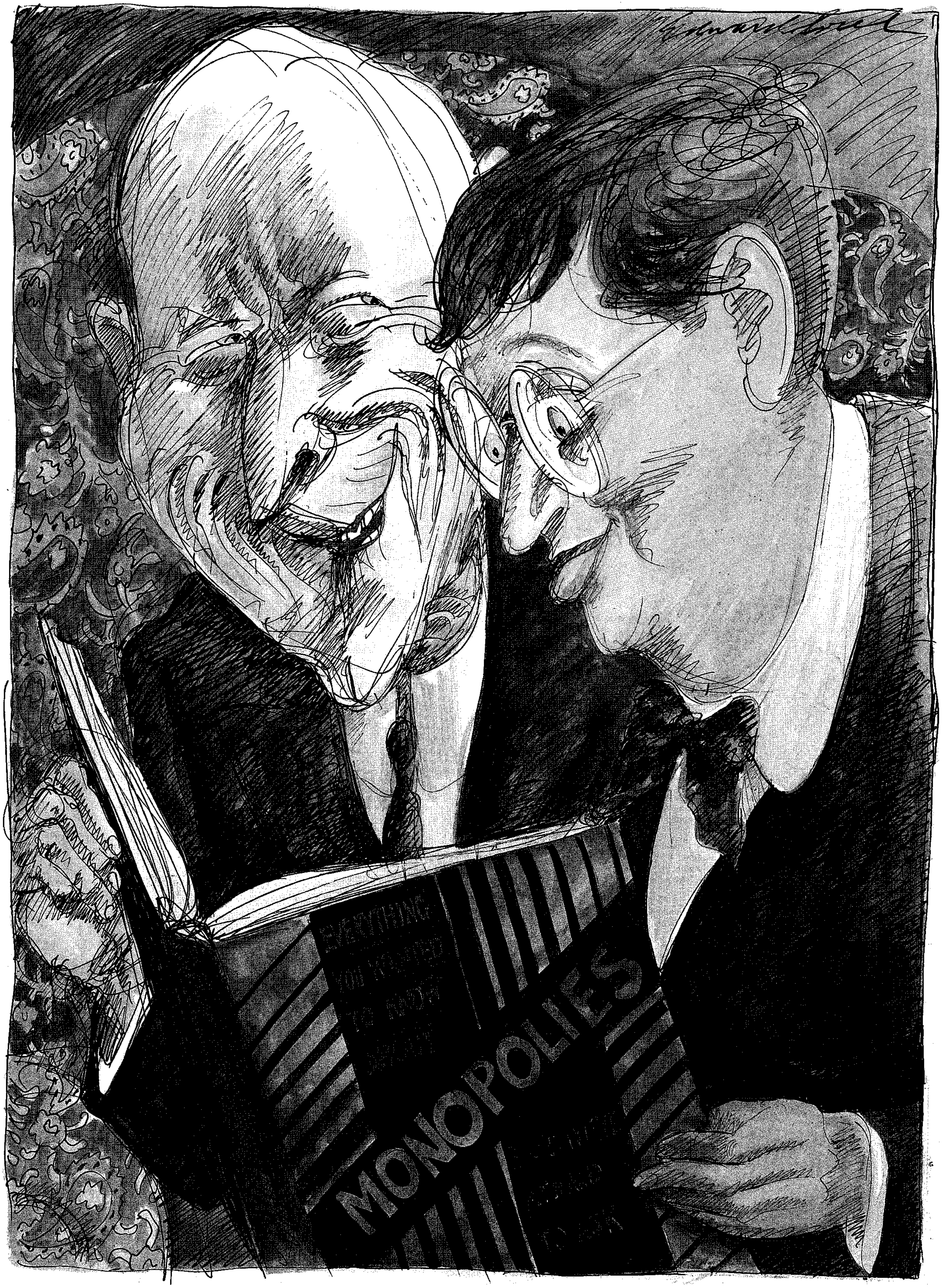
Have the comparisons between Rockefeller and Gates been overdone? Ron Chernow, a writer with previous biographies of J. P. Morgan and the Warburgs to his name, has provided more than ample material to answer this question. In a prodigiously researched new book, "Titan: The Life of John D. Rockefeller, Sr." (Random House; $30), Chernow surveys almost everything that is already known about his subject (the footnotes and bibliography alone come to nearly seventy pages) and also unearths some original material. He begins without hostile intent, billing his work as the first "fully rounded portrait" of Rockefeller, but ends up providing an object lesson in why forceful government intervention is sometimes necessary to maintain the healthy competition that business executives and editorial writers invariably claim to favor. "With his customary thoroughness, Rockefeller had devised an encyclopedic stock of anticompetitive weapons," Chernow writes. "Since he had figured out every conceivable way to restrain trade, rig markets, and suppress competition, all reform-minded legislators had to do was study his career to draw up a comprehensive antitrust agenda."

Rockefeller's legacy wasn't all negative, however. In creating Standard Oil, he helped usher in the modern era of large corporations and multinational enterprise. This mode of capitalism has its drawbacks, but it is unquestionably more efficient and durable than the system it replaced. "Two men have been supreme in creating the modern world: Rockefeller and Bismarck," Bertrand Russell wrote in 1934. "One in economics, the other in politics, refuted the liberal dream of universal happiness through individual competition, substituting monopoly and the corporate state, or at least movements toward them." Sixty-odd years on, many people believe that Bill Gates and Microsoft are playing a similarly historic role, helping to replace the industrial economy with a new, digital world. The full social and cultural ramifications of this transformation are far from clear, but they will certainly be major, thereby confirming something that the late Harvard economist Joseph Schumpeter used to argue: under capitalism the real revolutionaries are the capitalists.

JOHN DAVISON ROCKEFELLER was born in Richford, a small town in upstate New York, in 1839, and he lived to see Hitler's troops occupy the Rhineland. His long career confirms a basic economic truth that was well known to feudal monarchs but has sometimes been forgotten since their day: competition may make a man rich, but only the lack of it confers true Croesus status. In 1913, Rockefeller's shares in Standard Oil's successor companies were worth about nine hundred million dollars, which was then equal to about two and a half per cent of the total output of the American economy. This probably made him the richest private citizen who has ever lived. Bill Gates is worth about fifty billion dollars, but that amounts to just over half a per cent of the gross national product. If each man is judged in the context of his own times, the Microsoft chairman is only about a quarter as rich as Rockefeller was.

John D.'s early life reads like a cheap novel. (Gates, by contrast, had an unremarkable childhood in an upper-middle-class Seattle home.) He was the eldest son of William Avery Rockefeller, a quack doctor who roamed the country hawking magic potions and seducing gullible maidens. John D. even-

EDWARD SOREL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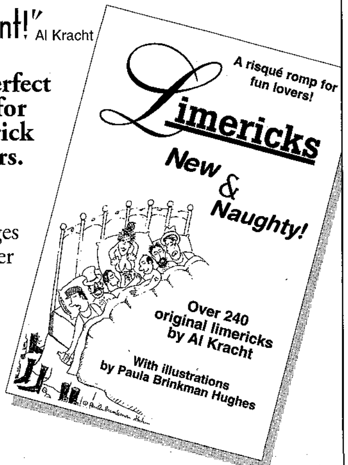
Rockefeller and Gates: Both inspired admiration and loathing in about equal measure; and both irked the Justice Department.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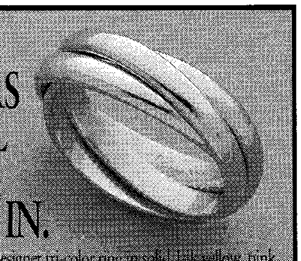

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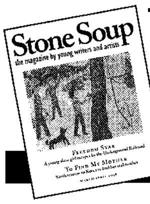

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tually disowned his father and, when his mother, Eliza, died, in 1889, announced that she had expired a widow. At that time, William, whom she had never divorced, was living with another woman, in Freeport, Illinois, under an assumed name. (In February, 1908, two years after William's burial in an unmarked grave, his secret life was exposed by Joseph Pulitzer's *World*.) Rockefeller was brought up mainly by his mother, who believed that the keys to raising children were the Bible, the Baptist Church, and the birch switch. He saw a lot of all three, and his financial success is an excellent advertisement for corporal punishment. Militant evangelism was a constant presence, and Chernow rightly points out that Rockefeller's career presents a textbook example of the sociologist Max Weber's thesis about the close link between Protestantism and capitalism. "I was trained from the beginning to work and to save," Rockefeller once told an interviewer. "I was taught that way by the minister when I was a boy."

When Rockefeller was thirteen, his family moved to Ohio, and he attended high school in Cleveland. One teacher described him as "the coldest blooded, the quietest, and most deliberate chap," but he had a good head for figures, and after leaving school, at fifteen, he became a junior clerk at Hewitt & Tuttle, a local trading company. There he learned all about ledgers, invoices, and Lake Erie shipping rates. After less than three years in the job, he quit and went into business with a young Englishman named Maurice B. Clark. Their firm, which they called Clark & Rockefeller, dealt in pork, salt, and other commodities. A year and a half later, on August 28, 1859, Colonel Edwin Drake struck oil in Titusville, a town in western Pennsylvania. Cleveland, a natural transport depot, quickly became an oil-boom town, and in 1863 Rockefeller and Clark teamed up with Samuel Andrews, a self-taught chemical engineer who also hailed from England, to open an oil refinery. It was the same year as Gettysburg and Vicksburg, but Rockefeller never seriously considered answering the call to arms. "I wanted to go in the Army and do my part, but it was simply out of the question," Rockefeller said later. "We were in a new business, and if I had not stayed it must have stopped—and with so many dependent on it." In 1865, Rockefeller bought out Clark's share; then he and Andrews built another refinery. The consolidation of the oil industry had begun. (Gates, of course, has had the same knack for entering a new industry at the right time: the 1981 transaction in which he bought the MS-DOS operating system from another small software company for fifty thousand dollars may well be the business deal of this century.)

ROCKEFELLER'S transformation from country boy to plutocrat can be traced largely to three character traits that are common to most rich men: avarice, industry, and cunning. As a boy, he used to buy candy by the pound, divide it into small portions, then sell it at a profit to his brothers and sisters. When he was a young man, he kept a red ledger in which he recorded every purchase and expenditure he made. (His wedding ring, which cost fifteen dollars and seventy-five cents, was recorded under "Sundry Expenses.") He forced his own children to keep similar records, and referred to his wife, Cettie, as the "general manager" of the family enterprise. The children—Bessie, Alta, Edith, and John D., Jr. (a fifth child, Alice, died in infancy)—received two cents a day for abstaining from candy, five cents an hour for practicing their musical instruments, and ten cents for sharpening pencils. If they were late for breakfast, they were fined.

Later in life, when he was enormously rich, he demanded an audit of how much was being spent on food in his various homes. On discovering that the rate at his New York town house was nearly double that at his homes in Westchester County and Ohio, he berated his New York housekeeper. The medical profession was another bugbear of his, and he regularly threatened to go to court rather than pay its "extortionate" fees. "I believe it my duty to a good many people who have been blackmailed by doctors to stand a trial," he declared.

Rockefeller's determination to scrape the last cent from every situation astounded even his closest colleagues. "I charted my course by figures, nothing but figures," he boasted. In negotiating to buy a rival business from a Dr. David Hostetter, he kept the conversation going for half an hour while he mentally computed the interest costs of the deal. "When we ended the talk, he agreed to the terms I offered, and I had saved thirty thousand dollars on the interest by my mental calculations that had never ceased while we were talking," Rockefeller later recalled. In reference to this talent, he added, "How well I remember when it helped me to beat a Jew!"

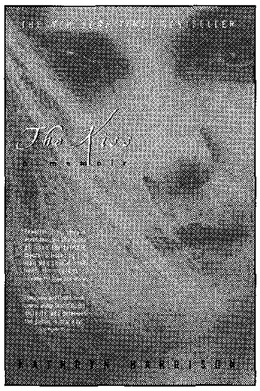
Bill Gates appears to be somewhat less fixated on money than Rockefeller, but he exhibits the same doggedness, asceticism, and workaholism. As a youngster, he used to sneak out of his bedroom window at night and travel three miles to get free use of a computer at a firm where he had a part-time job. At Microsoft, too, he is well known for working long into the night, and he shows no sign of slacking, despite his vast wealth. This may be because, like Rockefeller, he views himself as an outsider challenging an outmoded industrial establishment. (He has been known to refer to banks as "dinosaurs.") Rockefeller always saw himself as an unaffected provincial, who wasn't part of the Eastern aristocracy. He never turned his back on his low-church Baptist religion, and he reserved special contempt for people he believed to be snobs.

THE central issue facing any would-be monopolist is how to get rid of actual and potential competitors. This can be done legitimately, by exploiting superior methods to supply the entire market with a unique product that customers want to buy, or illegitimately, by using money and trickery to undermine the competition. Microsoft arguably adopted the first method when it invented the Windows graphical interface and married it to its MS-DOS operating system. (Critics claim that the firm also resorted to subterfuge and restrictive contracts, but Microsoft denies the charges.) Rockefeller chose the latter option, and, in so doing, he helped to create a new American archetype: the robber baron.

In March of 1867, he and Andrews founded another partnership, this time

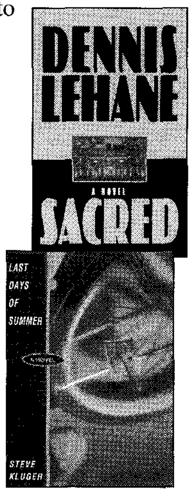
(Advt.)

Memories can comfort or torment us. Dreams can be exhilarating or terrible. All in all, they are the powerful stuff of fiction and nonfiction alike.



Kathryn Harrison shares dark remembrances indeed in ***THE KISS***, her controversial memoir of a most unnatural family relationship. When she was a young woman of twenty, the author was reunited with her estranged father; and her search for the affection that was missing from her childhood made her susceptible to the seductions of the parent she had never truly known. Harrison's book is not what you would expect however. This is an author whose first two novels were both *New York Times* Notable Books. Her courage, candor, and graceful prose imbue a horrific true story with a strange and haunting beauty.

In ***SACRED***, **Dennis Lehane** revisits his fictional private eye team of Patrick Kenzie and Angela Gennaro. This time their investigation into the disappearance of a beautiful, sad woman leads them far from blue collar Boston to Florida's Gulf Coast, America's land of dreams. The locale might be different from Lehane's two previous novels, but the grit, power, keen storytelling, and remarkable insight into the human character and condition that has earned this author widespread acclaim is still very much in evidence here.



Steve Kluger's ***LAST DAYS OF SUMMER*** remembers a time and a place with humor and great affection. This novel returns us to Brooklyn in the 1940s, and explores—entirely through letters, notes, matchbook covers, report cards, and telegrams—the developing relationship between an extremely persistent little boy in search of a father figure and the rookie third baseman for the New York Giants. While Kluger's very funny tale is undoubtedly nostalgic for a bygone era, it takes a serious look at loneliness and need, and at the palpable strength we human beings draw from one another.

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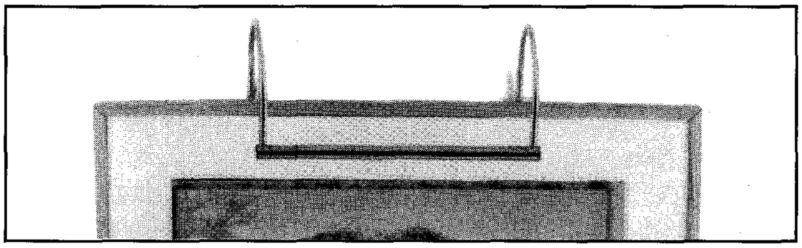

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with Henry Flagler, a brilliant but mercurial figure, who, like Rockefeller, hailed from western New York. During the following ten years, this firm, which in 1870 changed its name to Standard Oil, monopolized first the Cleveland market and then the entire country. The key to the oil business is the cost of transporting the crude oil to the refineries and transporting the finished product to its purchasers. Rockefeller and Flagler entered into a series of clandestine agreements with the railroads, which were dominated by buccaneers like Jay Gould and Commodore Vanderbilt, to obtain cheap shipping rates. The New York Central, for example, shipped Standard Oil's product from Cleveland to New York for $1.65 a barrel, while the official rate was $2.40 a barrel. The arrangement made sense to the railmen because Rockefeller promised to transport huge quantities of oil, and this meant that expensive track and rolling stock would rarely be idle.

Faced with these secret deals, Standard Oil's rivals had two choices: to close down or to sell out to Rockefeller. If an independent firm tried to stay in business, the trust would slash the price of kerosene (an oil product, which most American homes burned for lighting) in the firm's area until the upstart producer sold out or went bust, whereupon the price would be raised again. In early 1872, Standard Oil bought up twenty-two of its twenty-six Cleveland competitors—a binge that became known as the Cleveland Massacre—and in the following five years it repeated the trick in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, West Virginia, and New York. By the end of 1877, Rockefeller, who was still only thirty-eight, controlled almost ninety per cent of the oil refined in the United States. That the newspapers had started referring to him as the Mephistopheles of Cleveland appeared to bother him not a mite.

Rockefeller defended his predatory tactics by claiming that they were necessary to impose order on a market where incessant price wars had previously led to violent swings in prices and production. "The oil business was in confusion and daily growing worse. Someone had to make a stand," he said. By eliminating competition, Rockefeller argued, Standard Oil was able to invest in large-scale plants, which reduced the firm's costs and lowered the prices paid by consumers. In 1890, he boasted that the price of kerosene had fallen from twenty-three and a half cents a gallon to seven and a half cents a gallon during the twenty years of Standard Oil's existence.

Chernow accepts this argument without much quibbling, but it isn't as watertight as it sounds. The important question isn't whether prices fell but whether they would have fallen even further if there had been more competition. The one authority that examined the question closely, the United States government, concluded in 1906 that Standard Oil exploited its market dominance to keep profits artificially high—a strategy so successful that the company on occasion declared dividend payments of nearly a hundred per cent. (In 1902 alone, Rockefeller received what today would be a billion dollars in tax-free dividends and other income.)

Bill Gates similarly exaggerates his role as a price-cutter. The main reason that computers are getting cheaper is that the power of processor chips has been doubling every eighteen months. This has nothing to do with Microsoft's software or with its pricing strategy, which is a closely held secret. All we know for certain is that Microsoft's prices are a lot lower in competitive markets than they are in the markets it dominates. The firm gives away its Internet browser, which competes with Netscape, but its office software, which has a market share of about four-fifths, is priced at upward of two hundred dollars, an enormous markup on cost. During Microsoft's last financial year, it enjoyed gross profit margins of more than ninety per cent. Even Rockefeller would have envied that feat.

In April of 1879, a grand jury in Clarion County, Pennsylvania, indicted Rockefeller, Flagler, and seven other Standard Oil officials on charges of conspiring to monopolize the oil business, to extort railroad rebates, and to manipulate prices. For the next thirty years, the founder of Standard Oil spent much of his time trying to evade the attention of lawyers, journalists, and government investigators. Ultimately, he proved unsuccessful, but his holding action gave Standard Oil three long decades in which to milk its monopoly, and provided valuable pointers for later monopolists, such as Gates, who run into interfering bureaucrats.

The first lesson that Rockefeller taught was the importance of obfuscation. In private, he dismissed his critics as anarchists, socialists, croakers, whiners, howlers, grumblers, blackmailers, freebooters, pirates, and spoiled children, but on the rare occasions when he was forced to open his mouth in public he was unfailingly polite and conveniently forgetful. An inability to recall the details of a business deal done long ago is not a crime, and, as Rockefeller pointed out to his interrogators, he had done a lot of deals.

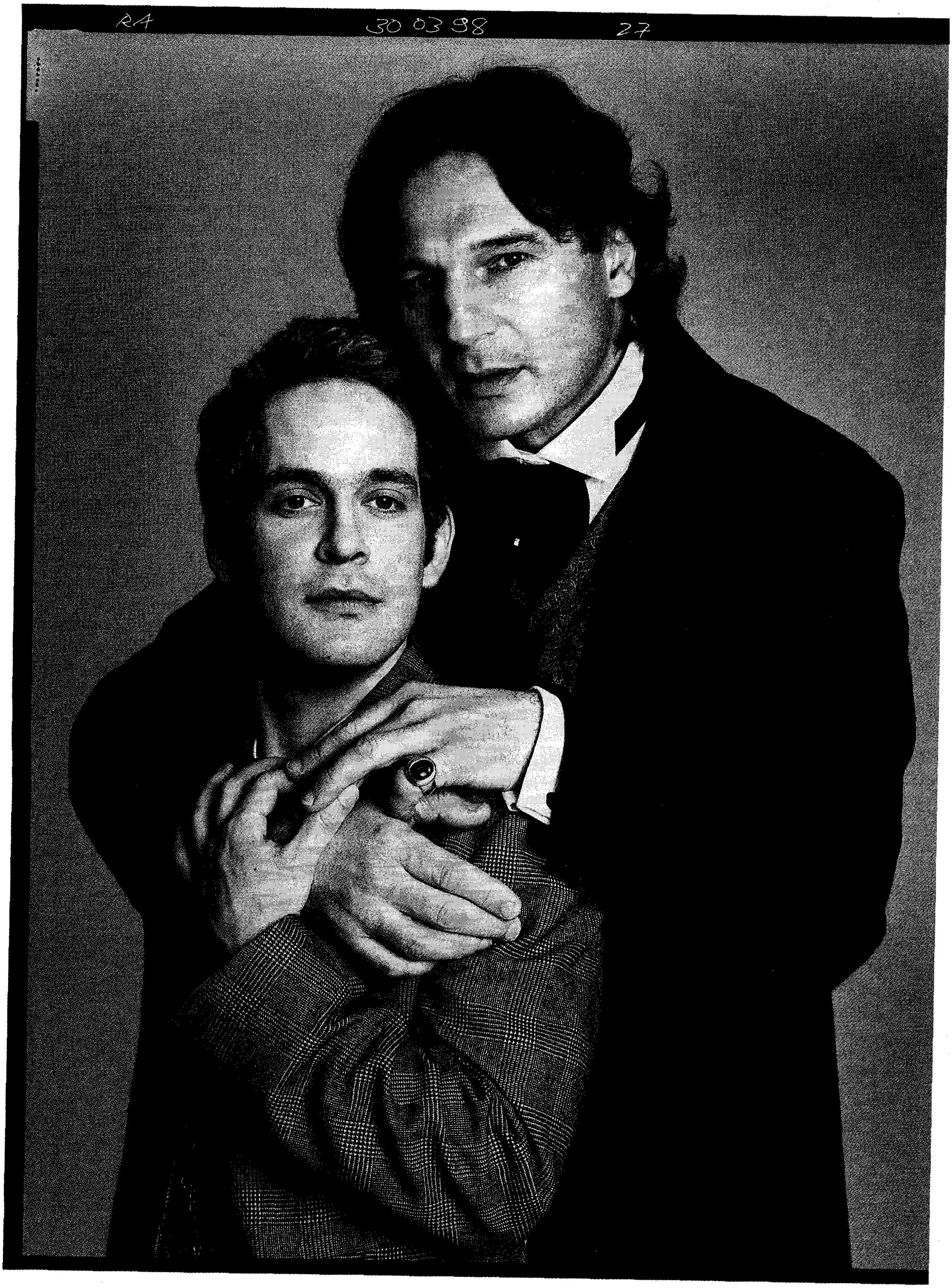
The Standard Oil founder also grasped the importance of political contributions—something that Gates failed to appreciate until recently, when he hired a bevy of lobbyists. Many prominent politicians were secretly on Standard Oil's payroll, and Rockefeller's emissaries were regularly dispatched to state legislatures to distribute the goodies. Rockefeller always denied any wrongdoing, but Chernow, by quoting from Rockefeller's private correspondence, demonstrates that he personally dealt with a number of corrupt officials.

The one area in which Rockefeller

MATINÉE IDYLL

A few seasons ago on Broadway, Liam Neeson washed ashore, almost nude and to sensational effect, as the strapping Irish seaman in O'Neill's "Anna Christie." Now he returns, in David Hare's "The Judas Kiss," fully clothed but in the even more astonishing incarnation of a handsome Oscar Wilde: O'Phallus becomes O'Flighty, as Wilde was called by his school chums. The play is a heterosexual examination of Wilde's homosexual pash for the waspish, whining Lord Alfred Douglas, played by Tom Hollander. Wilde, during the humiliation of his trials, likened his destiny to the progress of an ox to slaughter, which prompted G. K. Chesterton to observe, "Any ox that is really sacrificed is made sacred." Hare's play, directed by Sir Richard Eyre, is the latest boulevard view of Wilde's subsequent canonization as homosexual martyr.

Photograph by Richard Avedon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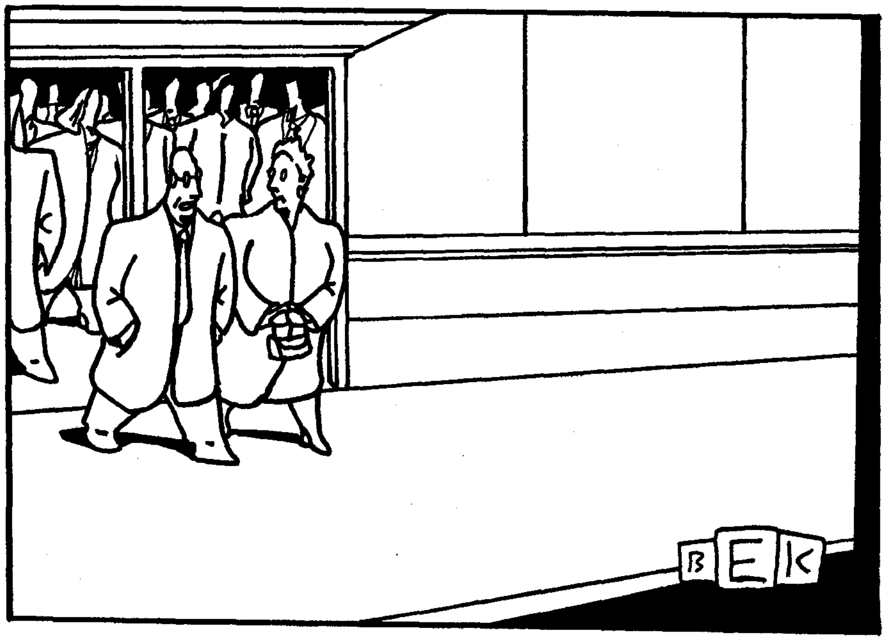
fell down was public relations. Standard Oil didn't maintain a press office, and the firm failed to respond adequately when journalistic attacks on it intensified. In 1894, Henry Demarest Lloyd, a renegade member of the Eastern establishment, published a splenetic attack on the man he called a "Czar of plutocracy," and Lloyd's book, "Wealth Against Commonwealth," was followed less than a decade later by an even more damaging series of articles, in *McClure's* magazine, by the muckraking journalist Ida M. Tarbell. Rockefeller still refused to react publicly. He also failed to perceive the influence of the new mass-market newspapers, which attacked him mercilessly. The jabs from Joseph Pulitzer's *World* he found particularly perplexing. "The owner of the *World* is also a large owner of property," he wrote to a colleague, "and I presume that, in common with other newspaper owners who are possessed of wealth, his eyes are beginning to be opened to the fact that he is like Samson, taking the initiative to pull the building down upon his head."

Rockefeller's lack of media savvy meant that he was slow to exploit the aspect of his life that eventually mitigated his reputation: his philanthropy. Despite his reputation as a skinflint, he considered it his religious duty to contribute to charity, and he did so, generously, throughout his life. By the time he died, he had given away five hundred and thirty million dollars, which is nearly six billion dollars in today's money. This cash pile created, among other things, a leading educational institution (the University of Chicago), a pioneering research center (the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, now called Rockefeller University), and a massive charitable trust (the Rockefeller Foundation). It may be tempting to dismiss Rockefeller's donations as self-serving—they certainly reduced his inheritance taxes—but that would be unfair. They dwarfed those of his rich contemporaries and insured that a sizable portion of his wealth, however ill-gotten, was eventually used for the common good.

THE assassination of President William McKinley, in September of 1901, was bad news for monopolies. The new President, Theodore Roosevelt, was a frequent critic of the trusts that controlled the production of everything from whiskey to matchsticks. During his first term, Roosevelt launched a legal assault on J. P. Morgan's Northern Securities Company, but he left Standard Oil alone. Then, in 1904, when it appeared obvious that Roosevelt was about to be elected to a second term, the executives at 26 Broadway, Standard Oil's headquarters, in New York, tried to head off any possible trouble by contributing to his cam-



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paign fund. One director gave a hundred thousand dollars, but it didn't help. "Darkest Abyssinia never saw anything like the course of treatment we received at the hands of the administration following Mr. Roosevelt's election in 1904," another Standard Oil director subsequently complained.

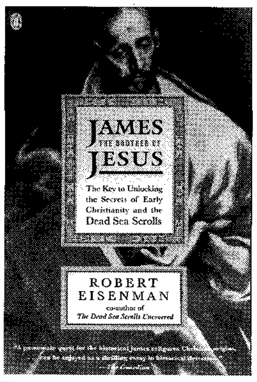
In May of 1906, the government issued a five-hundred-page report detailing Standard Oil's dubious practices, including its collusion with the railroads. Six months later, the Justice Department filed suit under the Sherman Antitrust Act, which had been enacted sixteen years earlier, to dismantle the company. The case dragged on for almost five years, but eventually the Supreme Court approved the breakup. When the news came, Rockefeller was playing golf with a Catholic priest. "Father Lennon, have you some money?" he asked, as phlegmatic as ever. When the clergyman answered no, Rockefeller said that that was a pity, because he would have advised him to "buy Standard Oil." This was excellent investment advice. When the successor companies to Standard Oil started trading on their own, in December, 1911, their stock prices soared—something that often happens when big companies are broken up and investors discover hidden value in the components. Rockefeller, who received shares in the new firms proportional to his holdings in their parent, became even richer. "The price of stock has gone up over one hundred per cent, so that Mr. Rockefeller and his associates have actually seen their fortunes doubled," Roosevelt lamented.

As Rockefeller aged, he seemed to lighten up. He played golf, handed out souvenir dimes to members of the public, and, after his wife died, in 1915, developed an eye for younger women, whom he squired to dances at the Ormond Beach Hotel, which was near a winter home he owned in Florida. This last development amazed his children, who had always seen him as a sober and pious Baptist. "What a gay person you are becoming: an opera one night and the Governor's Ball another," his son, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., wrote to him in 1928. On fine afternoons, John D., Sr., would take his lady friends for jaunts in his new automobile. "He sat tightly wedged in the back seat between two buxom women, usually neighbors or visitors, with their laps covered by a blanket, and he became notorious for his hot schoolboy hands roving under the blanket," Chernow writes. Once, when Rockefeller's car stopped at a traffic signal, a young woman leaped out of the back seat and declared, "That old rooster! He ought to be handcuffed."

During the nineteen-thirties, Rockefeller moved permanently to Ormond Beach. Having outlasted his wife, his siblings, and two of his daughters, he badly wanted to reach his century. "Many folks believe I've done much harm in the world, but on the other hand I've tried to do what good I could, and I really would like to live to be a hundred," he told Ormond Beach's mayor. He scrupulously followed the advice of his personal physician, a Dr. Hamilton Biggar, who prescribed a regimen of fresh air and five periods of rest a day. Tourists sometimes caught a glimpse of the ancient man sitting on his sunporch. At other times, he would go inside and listen to a religious service on the radio, call his broker, or watch a Hollywood movie—preferably one featuring Jean Harlow. Rockefeller "seemed to know for certain that the Lord was not a radical critic of society and would reward him in the hereafter," Chernow writes. One day, Henry Ford visited, and as he was leaving his host said, "Goodbye. I'll see you in Heaven," to which Ford replied, "You will if you get in."

Whether things turned out as Rockefeller expected in that regard is open to speculation, but he never achieved his final earthly ambition. On May 22, 1937, six weeks short of his ninety-eighth birthday, he suffered a heart attack and slipped into a coma. He died early the next morning and was buried four days later, in Cleveland. "His placid end disappointed critics who were still hoping for some earthly retribution," Chernow notes. To insure that these malcontents couldn't exact their revenge on Rockefeller's grave, his casket was placed in a bombproof tomb, and there it remains.

He left behind a diminished but thriving industrial legacy (Exxon, Mobil, Amoco, and Chevron are all direct descendants of the Standard Oil



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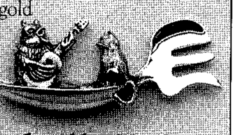

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breakup), an immensely rich family, an enormous charitable foundation, and an important principle of public policy: the economic benefits that big and powerful companies deliver should be balanced against the anticompetitive effects they can have.

In a recent Op-Ed piece for the *Times*, Ron Chernow addressed this issue, arguing that the Justice Department should avoid a broad attack on Microsoft, because the company is "far more vulnerable than Standard Oil" was. Unlike Rockefeller's creation, Gates's firm operates in a market where technological changes are incessant, and any one of these changes has "the potential to reshape the industry and subvert Microsoft's domination," Chernow wrote. This argument may sound convincing, but it depends on a naïve reading of the computer industry. In the seventeen years since I.B.M. adopted MS-DOS for its first P.C., there have been countless technological developments, but none of them have even come close to subverting Microsoft's position.

In some ways, Standard Oil had a good deal less monopoly power than Microsoft has, and this explains why it went to such outrageous lengths to protect its lucrative position. Consumers don't care whether they use Mobil or Chevron gasoline, so there is no brand loyalty. Oil doesn't take much training to use, and it works in any brand of oil-burning appliance. Computer software, by contrast, takes hours of training to use, and it is often incompatible with other products. Once consumers have mastered one version of it—in this case Windows—they are understandably reluctant to switch to a rival brand, and it is therefore extremely difficult for other firms to challenge the market leader, which can then exploit its monopoly position as a base from which to attack adjacent markets.

Economists refer to the advantages enjoyed by firms like Microsoft as "network externalities," and these are what lie at the heart of the Justice Department's legal assault on the firm. The economic theorizing that supports the government's case is relatively new, but its basic thrust is familiar, and it is well summarized by Chernow's verdict on Standard Oil: "Free markets, if left completely to their own devices, can wind up terribly *un*free." ♦

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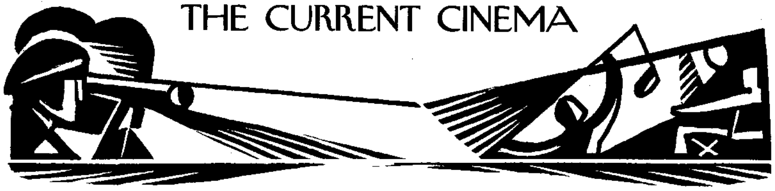
THE CURRENT CINEMA



GOING ABROAD

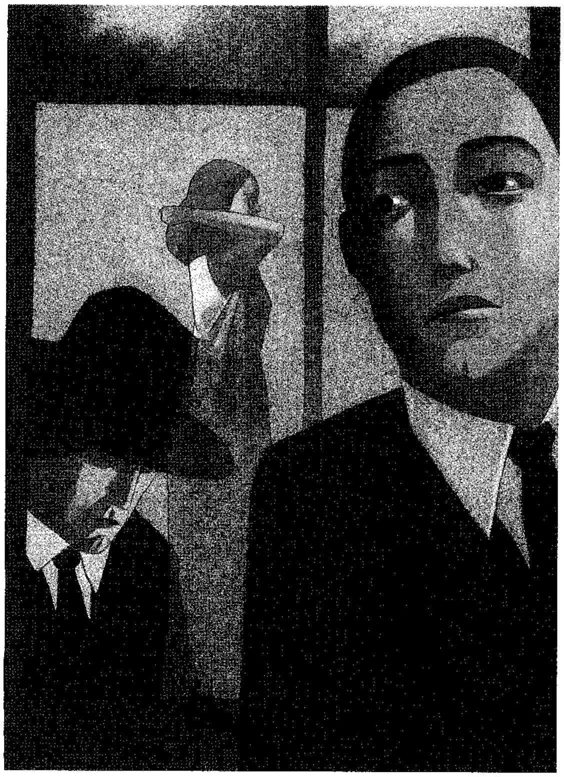
Culture shock has its pleasures.

BY DAPHNE MERKIN

PITY the poor movie with subtitles. Film critics like nothing better than to bewail the parochialism of American audiences and to sing the praises of an anointed set of little-known (mostly Russian and Japanese) directors; I recently attended a panel discussion at which a bunch of movie critics snobbishly opined that the situation of foreign films was now "dire" and that their cachet was irrevocably gone. In making these pronouncements, of course, no one had in mind those viewer-friendly imports by Chabrol or Rohmer or Almodóvar, in which the characters are better-dressed or steamier versions of ourselves, plopped into a different but still accessible cultural landscape. They were referring to *foreign* foreign films, where even the sandwiches look different, and you have to crane to read the subtitles because you never took Dutch in college. It's true that watching these films is labor-intensive: they require vigilant attention, lest you miss a crucial patch of dialogue in which it emerges that the woman you took for the protagonist's wife is really his sister. What they require, in short, is that you be in the mood.

Most critics don't seem to have been in the mood for "Character," the winner of this year's Oscar for best foreign film. The movie's implacable air of foreignness has less to do with its twenties Rotterdam setting than with its over-all psychological tone. That tone will strike you as either tedious or grimly illuminating, but it's always uptight. Even the film's title seems dour and stuffy, somehow: the very notion of "character," like "honor" or "duty," seems a quaintly bygone, if noble, concept—guaranteed to elicit a polite yawn.

Like a great nineteenth-century novel that presumes on its reader's infinite patience, "Character" starts at the end and then unwinds backward to reveal the events that have led to its inevitable outcome. A wild-eyed young man with blood on his face and hands exits a warehouse after what appears to be the fatal resolution of a long-standing feud. Rain comes down in torrents, and horses' hooves clip-clop on the cobblestoned streets. The young man, Katadreuffe (Fedja van Huet), is caught and interrogated. He insists on his innocence, and when he invokes the dead



Enmity between father and son, and a meditation on the limits of free will, in "Character."

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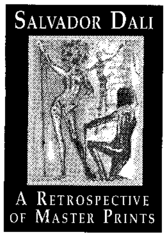

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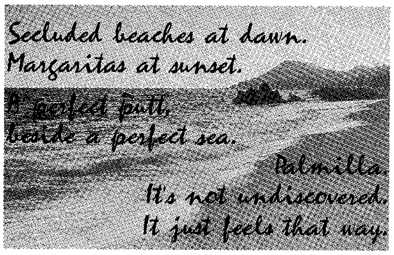

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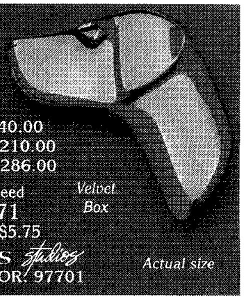

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man's name—"Dreverhaven"—the detective remarks, "That name sounds like imminent thunder, right?" (Then and there, I was hooked; sometimes all it takes is a sentence.) The young man replies, obliquely, "The name was a legend long before I first heard it." At this bewilderingly melodramatic point, the film, having either piqued or lost your interest, shifts into a sustained flashback.

Katadreuffe is the illegitimate son of Dreverhaven (Jan Decleir), the despised town bailiff, and the silent, hardworking Joba (Betty Shuurman), who used to be Dreverhaven's housekeeper and has refused to marry him. Dreverhaven, who moves about the broad avenues of Rotterdam in a long black coat and hat, is renowned for his ruthlessness: he throws dying women out on snowy streets when the rent is overdue. In the evenings, while his mother sews, the young Katadreuffe keeps busy by teaching himself English from a cache of dusty books; Joba resists all efforts at conversation, which only fuels her son's will to acquire an education. As the years pass, Katadreuffe's ambition intensifies: when he borrows money to buy a cigar shop and the venture fails, he talks the law firm that is handling his bankruptcy into hiring him as a clerk. After years of hard work, shunning all romantic distraction, he becomes a partner. But his triumph is overshadowed by the looming presence of Dreverhaven—who, it turns out, not only owns the bank that has arranged for his loans but also seems to have passed on to him his driven but isolated nature. Unable to let go of his hatred of his father even after he has succeeded in the career for which he has sacrificed everything, Katadreuffe goes to confront Dreverhaven and finally comes up against the perverse self-mortification of his father's character.

The film, directed by Mike van Diem and adapted from a 1938 Dutch novel, has the look of a Rembrandt painting, full of silvery-brown hues. There's barely a spot of red or yellow in the first half; when Katadreuffe first goes to the prosperous end of town where the law firm is situated and we glimpse some trees in bloom, they appear like a hallucinated vision of light and color. The film brilliantly evokes a confined, class-ridden society ruled by smug burghers, and it moves at its own unstreamlined, Dickensian pace, amassing the weight of its particular world. Van Huet seems wooden at first, until you realize that he's inhabiting a strangled personality; Decleir, with his fishy blue eyes, is remarkable as the hateful but finally poignant ur-father, who has guilty nightmares and longs to be put out of his misery. In an era that values elliptical, ironic styles over epic, earnest ones, "Character" is wonderfully clunky and unchic.

"A FRIEND OF THE DECEASED," Vyacheslav Krishtofovich's film about life in the new, Ronald Lauderized Ukraine, has a contemporary, low-key charm—more French than Russian, actually, which makes sense, given that the film is a Franco-Ukrainian co-production. (O brave new world of cinematic mergers!) There's a lot of photogenic tristesse in it, a lot of melancholic staring into the middle distance, as though an Albert Camus character had suddenly wandered into a brazen, supercapitalist culture where everything depended on the price of oranges. Anatoli (Alexandre Lazarev) is an unemployed translator who spends his day ordering double espressos in a pretty neighborhood café or waiting by his speakerphone. Estranged from his wife, who leaves him for a man in a red Ford, Anatoli grows suicidally despondent, and hires a contract killer (the new Ukraine seems to be buzzing with them) to put a hit on himself—before he has a change of heart, that is. The movie's theme, which is the disappearance of friendship into the "glorious Soviet past," to be replaced by pure business relations, is sounded whenever Anatoli is asked whether he's in need of cash. Lazarev isn't called upon to act much, but he's beautiful to look at; he reminded me, alternately, of Jean-Pierre Léaud, Paul McCartney, and Joe Mantegna. The script (by Andreï Kourkov) is engagingly laconic, and the film is lovingly shot by Vilen Kaluta ("Burnt by the Sun"). The real pleasure, though, comes from the small educational moments—learning about a drink called Kiglevitch, which has a melonlike scent, or that Earl Grey tea is in demand in the Ukraine, along with Pampers. You know you've left America far behind when a sexy young widow who has prepared a celebratory dinner for Anatoli on the flimsy pretext of her son's having reached ten months of age, turns to him and says, "Can you help me tie my apron? My hands smell like herring." ♦

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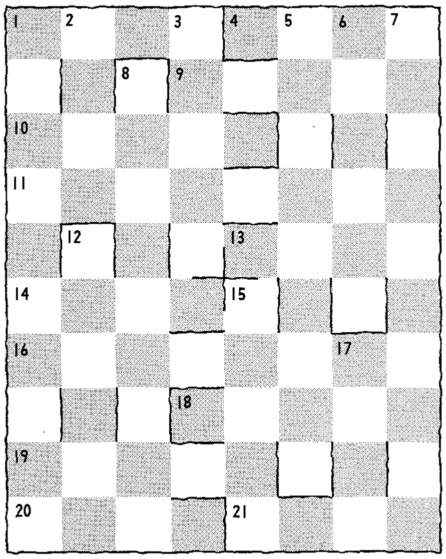


ACROSS

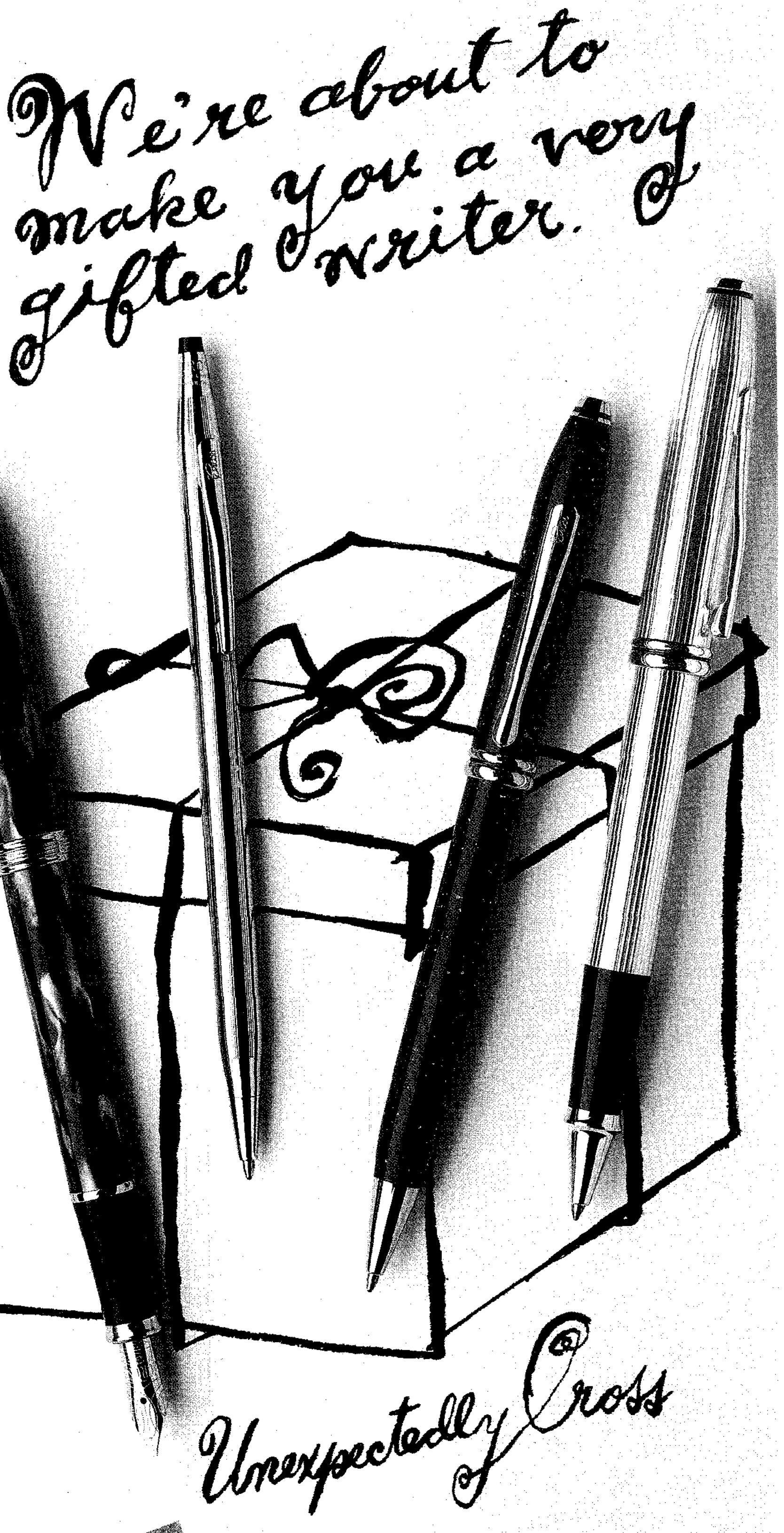
1 Pass new taxes (4)
4 Club with hot tub (4)
9 Subway crossed half of road (5)
10 Moral concept grasped by the thickheaded (5)
11 Plays containing ten scenes (8)
13 Dog owner's command beginning to enrage Spot (4)
14 Overtimes following last of scheduled periods (4)
16 Drive fast to fill lifeless battery (8)
18 Nation's poor are O.K. (5)
19 Fourth segment of Super Bowl rocks joint (5)
20 "I Love Lucy" actor's bad side (4)
21 Move up fifty-one feet (4)

DOWN

1 Left desk cluttered and confused (10)
2 Bug one naysayer (4)
3 Upturned lips on Kyle's face—it's a smile, sort of (5)
5 Perfume dispensers adjust to arm size (9)
6 Try to keep lunch arrangement (6)
7 Use recipe to stuff hot pot's contents? (10)
8 Saucy food ruined Rob's shirt (5, 4)
12 Porter catches up with husband and wife (6)
15 Lower Subaru's front hood (5)
17 Page from simple affidavit (4)

• •

The solution to puzzle No. 42 appears on page 106. For a free copy of "The New Yorker's Guide to Solving Cryptic Crosswords," please send your fax number or a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Solvers' Guide," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. For an electronic version, send an E-mail to puzzleguide@newyorker.com.



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JERRY SPRINGER'S VOICE MAIL

BY BILL SCHEFT

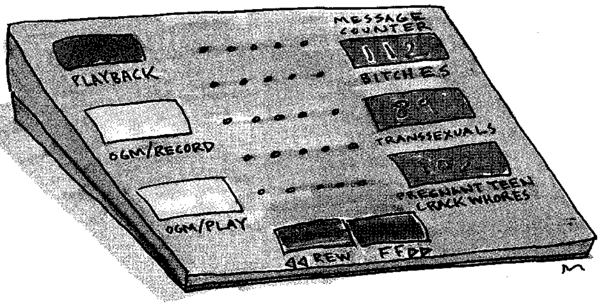
"People who come on desperately want to be on."—*Jerry Springer, whose talk show gets two thousand calls every day from viewers volunteering to appear.*

"You have reached the offices of 'The Jerry Springer Show.' If you would like to appear on an upcoming program, please briefly describe your specific defect, mutation, or deviance and leave a number or treatment center where you can be reached. No smokers, please. If you feel like killing somebody—sorry, we don't have the appropriate insurance clearance right now. You might want to contact 'The Jenny Jones Show.' Please wait for the beep."

"JERRY? Hi, my name's Ronnie. I'm not sure whether I'm a transvestite or a transsexual. Wait a minute. I just opened my mail, and there's a bill for twenty thousand dollars from some doctor at Johns Hopkins. I guess I'm a transsexual. How much does your show pay?"

"This is Denise. Denise W. I hope I'm calling the right number. I cannot be a guest on your June 5th show, 'Who You Callin' Bitch?' I broke three of my nails pulling my daughter out of the Disposall. How can I be expected to scratch the slut's eyes out when I only have seven working nails? Please reschedule me for your June 17th program, 'I'm Callin' *You* Bitch, Bitch.' "

"Jerry, this is Bob. Just Bob. My father has been having sex with my sister ever since she had my baby. I didn't know the child was mine until last week. I don't even remember having sex with her. But, you know, my family has a lot of secrets, my not knowing I had sex with my sister being just one of them. Is there anything here?"



"Hello, this is Martin Resnick, Martin Resnick Consulting. My daughter, Tracy, worked in Washington last year and—Jesus, this is tough—claims she did not have an affair with the President. Maybe you could get him on the show to deny it? I think he's free Wednesday."

"Jerry? Bob again. Turns out it's not my father who's been having sex with my sister. I just remembered—it's my uncle. And it isn't my sister who's been having sex with my uncle. It's my aunt."

"Hi, this is Diesel. Who do I speak to about getting a job as a bouncer on your show? I have no experience, but I know I can do this. I've been practicing. Check this out: 'Hey, stay in your seat! You gotta sit down, Ma'am. Sir, you gotta sit down. Whoa, whoa, whoa, settle down there, pal! You gotta behave yourself. If you get out of your seat one more time, I'm coming up there.' "

"Jerry? Bob. Uh, it's not my baby. It's my cousin."

"Yes, hello. Does your show do makeovers anymore? My name is Eunice Manheim. My son Eunice is a skinhead. I'd like him to be transformed into a Republican congressman. It should take about twenty minutes. He's a size 42 husky."

"Jerry, it's Bob again. I'm sorry about the other calls. Next time, I'll do my homework. Anyway, I noticed you occasionally have people on the show—you know, freaks of nature. Well, I just ate a quart of ice cream too fast and I have a wicked headache. Am I warm?"

"Jerry, I have watched your show faithfully for the last year. Have you no shame? Why don't you contribute something responsible to society? Why do you insist on showcasing some sick, maladapted microcosm of American culture? You know what I'm talking about. Get somebody on the show who can actually land a punch. What's with all the lunging? And the hair-pulling? That's all I see—lunging and hair-pulling. Would it kill you to have a little blood on the set once in a while? You know what would make a good segment? Some guy getting stitched up from the last segment."

"Hey, I'm calling back because I just thought of this. I could convince my wife to have sex with one of the guys at work—like Richie. Yeah, Richie would be good. Wait, Richie's too big. Maybe Alex. Alex is better. I can take Alex. O.K., so I'll do that and we'll all go on the show and my wife will admit what the jagoff's been doing behind my back, and—boom!—I'll coldcock the son of a bitch. Nighty-night, Alex. I guarantee he'll still be down when you're giving that final thought of yours. This may take a while to set up. I'll call back a week from Friday."

"Jerry, I don't know how to tell you this, but I finally got the DNA-test results back. I'll just come out and say it. Jerry—I mean, Dad—I need some money. Let's meet next week on the show. I've got a topic: 'My Biological Father Won't Return My Calls.' O.K.? Jerry? It's me. Your son. Bob." ♦

MICHAEL CRAWFORD

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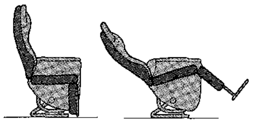

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